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JUDAISM

ISRAEL ON ITS THIRTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

Judith N. Elizur

ISRAEL AND REFORM JUDAISM

Joshua O. Haberman

PRECURSORS OF ZIONISM

Monty N. Penkower

AN EARLY OPPONENT OF ZIONISM

Maurice G. Bowler

NORDAU AS A SOCIAL CRITIC

Meir Ben-Horin

S.D. GOITEIN — SCHOLAR EXTRAORDINARY

Trude Weiss-Rosmarin

ISSUE No. 131 / VOLUME 33 / NUMBER 3 / \$3.50 **SUMMER 1984**

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*.

JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL is published by the American Jewish Congress. It appears in January, April, July and October. Office of Publication: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Re-entered as second-class matter at Post Office, New York City, N.Y. Subscription in the United States and Canada, \$12.00 for one year, \$20.00 for two years, \$28.00 for three years; foreign subscription, \$13.00 for one year, \$22.00 for two years, \$31.00 for three years. Special rate for bulk (10 or more) and student subscriptions, \$8.00. Single issue, \$3.50; single issue abroad, \$4.00. Make checks payable to the order of JUDAISM, and send to 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Allow six weeks for notice of change of address.

US ISSN 0022-5762

The Board of Editors invites articles, communications, comments and discussion for publication. Address: Editors, JUDAISM, 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Copyright © 1984 by the American Jewish Congress.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

Israel on its Thirty-Six Birthday

The year 1984 marks the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, twice *chai* in Hebrew numerology. During this period the State, beset by major problems and difficulties, has continued to be the greatest miracle of the twentieth century and the shining hope of Jewish history.

These thirty-six years, however, have not been an unbroken era of glory. The original image of the State of Israel as a brave, young David has been transformed, for many, into that of a mighty Goliath, and the idealism of its early years has been replaced, in many cases, by less attractive qualities.

Judith N. Elizur is an American who has lived in Israel for many years and brings both American and Israeli perspectives to bear in "The Image of Israel at Thirty-Six."

In our time, there is no more striking example of the radical transformation of one specific perspective than the *volte-face* of Reform Judaism vis-à-vis Zionism.

The year 1986 will mark the one hundredth anniversary of the Pittsburgh Platform, in which American Reform went on record officially opposing Zionism, since Jews were merely a religious denomination. In the intervening century, it has shifted from anti-Zionism to non-Zionism and today it is, in overwhelming measure, Zionist in orientation and pro-Israel in its program.

In his paper, "The Reform Rabbinate and Israel," *Joshua O. Haberman* presents a program of action for Reform Judaism in the State of Israel, which, he believes, will serve the welfare of the state and advance the cause of liberal Judaism in its borders.

Many and varied sources fed into the mainstream of Zionist thought and action, which led to the fulfillment of the Zionist ideal in the establishment of the State of Israel. However, it is generally forgotten that the authorized religious leadership of European Jewry was largely opposed to Zionism at its inception and for many years beyond. Orthodox rabbis tended to regard it as sacrilegious to intervene in the process of redemption, which was to be initiated only by God in His own time. Reform rabbis felt threatened by this emphasis upon Jewish nationalism, since they preferred to regard themselves as Germans, Frenchmen or Americans "of the Jewish faith." Even Conservative rabbis, whose philosophy of Judaism stressed the concept of Jewish peoplehood, looked askance at an active program for a Jewish state, some of them signing the now-famous protest against holding the first Zionist Congress in Munich.

In every group, however, there were a few outstanding leaders who broke with the majority and espoused the Zionist cause. In his paper, "Religious Forerunners of Zionism," *Monty N. Penkower* presents a group of Orthodox rabbis, largely Sephardic, who wholeheartedly embraced the Zionist ideal from its inception, in some cases anticipating Herzl and his co-workers.

On the other hand, a consistent opponent of Zionism was Claude G. Montefiore, one of the major theologians and Jewish scholars produced by British Jewry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Deeply interested in the New Testament and in the relationships between Judaism and Christianity, he was the outstanding exponent of Liberal Judaism in Great Britain. Like his counterparts in American Reform Judaism, he was strongly opposed to Zionism, regarding himself as "an Englishman of the Mosaic persuasion." In view of the all but total triumph of Zionist and pro-Israel sentiment in the Jewish community, Montefiore has been unjustly neglected.

In his paper, "Zion — Neither Here Nor There?" *Maurice G. Bowler* offers a key to understanding this Englishman's outlook on Jewish nationalistic aspirations.

The Sabbath Queen

The poet laureate of the Hebrew Renaissance, Hayyim Nahman Bialik, has left a rich legacy for our times. One of his best known poems, "*Shabbat haMalkah*," has attained a quasi-liturgical status, both because of its theme, the adoration of the Sabbath, and its moving melody. The song, which appears in many prayer books, is often used as part of the synagogue service.

On the basis of a close reading of the text, *Anne Lapidus Lerner* draws some interesting implications for Bialik's outlook on religion and tradition, both from what is said and from what is left unsaid in the poem.

A Giant in Scholarship

Sad experience teaches that functional literacy, the capacity to read and write, can go hand in hand with cultural illiteracy, ignorance of the knowledge, wisdom and beauty to be found in the work of great scholars and artists. A case in point is offered by Professor Shlomo Dov Goitein, whose name and extraordinary achievements are known to only a small number of American Jews. His eightieth birthday a few years ago attracted little attention in the American-Jewish community which likes to conceive of itself as "the People of the Book," at least in the speeches of after-dinner orators.

In her paper, "Shlomo Dov Goitein — Scholar Extraordinary," *Trude Weiss-Rosmarin* communicates some of the intellectual excitement of his career. She surveys the contents of his *magnum opus*, *A Mediterranean Society*, the fifth and concluding volume of which is now ready for the printer, as well as of some of his other works. In addition, she offers a lively account of the fascinating background and personality of this giant in Jewish scholarship.

What is Our Role in the World?

It is frequently asserted — and with considerable justice — that a hallmark of Judaism is its emphasis upon the active participation of man in the world, because the universe, created by God, awaits its completion by man, who, in the fine Talmudic phrase, is "co-partner with God in the work of creation."

The Jewish tradition, however, is too variegated and complex in nature to be subsumed under one system of thought or described as possessing only one approach to life.

In his paper, "Action and Non-Action in Jewish Spirituality," *Michael Fishbane* presents a defense of man's passivity as the high-road to the fulfillment of life. He maintains that Jewish spirituality calls for the total submerging, or even the suppression, of the human will, which marks the highest manifestation of obedience to the will of God.

Of course, there is the omnipresent danger of identifying one's own desire with the will of God. The baleful consequences of this projection are writ large in the history of interference, violence and persecution, of which religion has all too often been guilty.

But whether or not his approach reflects a normative or even a major strand in the Jewish tradition, Fishbane's paper is a helpful corrective to the exaggeration inherent in the view of man's active role in the world that is generally ascribed to Judaism.

Nordau's Views Are Still Valid

One of the most distinguished and capable of Theodore Herzl's adjutants in the early years of the Zionist movement was Max Nordau. However, Nordau was much more than a Zionist advocate — he was an incisive and controversial critic of many phases of Western civilization.

On the hundredth anniversary (plus one) of his sensational and influential work, *The Conventional Lies of Civilized Mankind*, we present a paper entitled "Watchman, What of the *Lies*?" by Meir Ben Horin. In it he analyzes Nordau's views and suggests a possible relationship between his social criticism and his Zionist convictions.

The Sensitivity of Rabbi Kook

The writings of the late Chief Rabbi *Abraham Isaac Kook* who, by virtue of his mind and heart towered above his own generation as he does above ours, are an inexhaustable fountain of spiritual refreshment. For him, tolerance of conflicting views was not merely a counsel of "prudence" or social engineering, or even an intellectual obligation. For him, it was an ethical imperative flowing out of his deep religious faith which saw harmony as the over-arching attribute of God's world. We are desperately in need of the kind of guidance provided by his statement "On the Art of Criticism."

Which Sense is Most Important?

In his essay, "Touch, Sight and Hearing in Jewish Sexuality," *Monford Harris* calls attention to the importance of the senses as the instruments of human experience in general, and relates them to Jewish sexuality.

An Analysis of Ozick

One of the most challenging figures on the American-Jewish literary scene today is Cynthia Ozick. Through her short stories and essays, as well as her novels, she has become a symbol of the American Jew in search of authenticity. In his essay, "The Religious Art of Cynthia Ozick," *Louis Harap* explores her relationship to the Jewish tradition and her approach to Jewish living today.

R.G.

The Image of Israel at Thirty-Six

JUDITH N. ELIZUR

THE LOW POINT IN POSITIVE FEELING towards Israel that was reached in September 1982, after the Phalangist massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut, was the culmination of a process, not an overnight reversal. The image of Israel at its creation in 1948, that of a sanctuary state offering refuge to the victims of Nazi bestiality, was replaced by the image of a garrison state bent on carrying out a megalomaniac plan to rearrange the Middle East's political map. The international communications media, echoing the official policy of their governments, transmitted the latter image undiluted during the summer of 1982. But this repellent picture of the Jewish state had not been invested overnight: its outlines were discernible shortly after Israel's most stunning military accomplishment, the victory over Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967. The details were filled in during the ensuing years.

Most states have at the core of their national image some indication of the component of sovereignty that is the essence of their existence. This representation of power varies from one nation-state to another: the distinction between great and small powers is acknowledged by all. But the notion that every state has some dimension of strength is regarded as a *sine qua non*. This, if anything, is normalcy in international relations.

In this sense, at least, the State of Israel emerged on the world scene as an abnormal construct. At its core was not the quality of strength or sovereignty displayed by every other independent member of the world community, but its very opposite. Israel as the collective embodiment of Jewish weakness, as a sanctuary representing a threat to no one, was proclaimed and accepted by the United Nations in 1948 in the darkest hour of its bitter struggle for independence.

Why was this sanctuary state acceptable to the nations of the world at that time? Its creation relieved them of a double burden — of conscience and of necessity. The West's complicity in making possible the Holocaust of European Jewry was overwhelming, given its refusal to rescue the victims of Nazism while there was still time; assenting in the creation of Israel was one way to assuage this guilt. Furthermore, Europe had no desire to reintegrate into its postwar society the victims who had managed to survive. Neither the Austrians nor the French wanted to restore prop-

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erty to their Jewish owners. There were pogroms in postwar Poland when Jewish survivors returned to their towns and villages and demanded their homes back. The creation of Israel as a place which would attract and absorb these human reminders of an ugly past that was preferably forgotten appeared, therefore, both convenient and conscience-salving.

There were other components in Israel's image at its inception. There was the realization that it was located in the Holy Land, with all the complex religious overtones (not always positive) involved therein; that it was a democracy on the Western model; and that it laid claim to a certain moral stature (in its own eyes as well as in those of others) as a "light unto the nations." In 1948 these image elements were secondary, however, to the central one of refuge, of the sanctuary state. And this abnormal image nucleus provided the link to the age-old historic stereotype of the Jew, characterized by weakness and vulnerability in his 2,000 years of wandering through the Diaspora.

It may be claimed, therefore, that already at its inception, Israel's image was a complex one, a sort of double-decker image, or at least one having an infra-structure of historic echo that did not characterize any of the other new states emerging in the decades of decolonialization after World War II. Here, again, Israel appeared to be *sui generis*: its image nucleus of weakness was a sort of black hole by comparison to every other "normal" state's nucleus of power. However, it was not one-dimensional in the historic sense, but tied to an ancient and troubling stereotype.

The first few years of Israel's existence did not affect this sanctuary state image since the new nation was busy at the task for which the world community had created it. Overnight its population doubled, as 750,000 refugees streamed in from the Displaced Persons' camps in Europe and from the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East (in equal numbers, it should be noted). The consequent economic strain, which involved the imposition of an austerity regime, only strengthened the image of a weak state heavily dependent on outside aid to insure its very existence.

Truth to tell, not very much attention was paid to Israel in those years, either in the international media or in the corridors of power in the West. Europe was totally absorbed in its own post-war reconstruction and, subsequently, in the process of decolonialization. The United States of Truman and Eisenhower became more and more obsessed with the Soviet threat, culminating in the Cold War. The Middle East was only one front in the encirclement of the Russian menace as viewed by Dulles and there was no room for Israel in the Baghdad pact. In 1956 there was no resonance to the argument that Israel constituted a strategic asset to the West.

Nor did Israel attract attention because of the dislocation of Arab population that resulted from its creation. True, the 650,000 Palestinian refugees (as they were then termed) were a problem on the UN agenda,

but the dimensions of their problem were far smaller than the India-Pakistan refugee problem or that of the millions of refugees from East Germany streaming to the West. Humanitarian sentiment and the vested interests of missionary groups combined to set up UNRWA, but the Palestinian problem was not seen as a political issue save by the Arab world in the 1950s. And their oil clout was not yet powerful enough to influence the world's view of Israel.

1956 provoked the first change in the prevailing image: for some reason not very clear to the outside world, Israel, together with England and France, embarked on a military venture against Egypt, which seemed totally out of character for a sanctuary state. Still more dissonant, in terms of the supposed weakness of that state, was the fact that it took Sinai from the Egyptians. So intolerable was this notion to Dulles that he threatened Ben-Gurion with sanctions — whereupon the latter withdrew from Sinai and Gaza overnight. In a symbolic sense, Ben-Gurion thereby erased the evidence of Israel's power, which so contradicted the "abnormal" core of its image. Dulles withdrew the threat of sanctions and the original image was restored, for the time being. But the European left never forgave Israel for its complicity in this failed neocolonial outrage; for it, Israel's image was flawed irretrievably.

The 1956 episode provided the first indication that any display of strength by Israel would be problematic. The reason for this is psychological: apparently the vulnerability in the traditional Jewish stereotype was not merely an innocuous characteristic but an essential one, related to the belief that the victim deserved his fate. Not until the Second Vatican Council in 1965 relieved contemporary (but not first century) Jewry of responsibility for the Crucifixion was the notion of a deicide people cast aside. And the concomitant of the deicide view is that God is meting out deserved punishment to the Jews if they suffer in this world. Therefore, if the victim role is the natural one for them, any display of strength on their part represents a stepping out of this role which is theologically and psychologically intolerable. Dulles as a devoted churchman in 1956, a decade before the Catholic Church let the Jews off the hook (with the World Council of Churches looking on with baited breath), still was party to the old stereotype. If Israel, the Jewish state, embodied Jewish characteristics, how could it dare act in such a fashion?

In this view, the psychological dissonance which is created any time that Israel displays strength can be explained only by reference to the infrastructure of its image, the old, historic, negative Jewish stereotype. For if every other state normally displays strength as an essential element in its image, why shouldn't Israel as well? Why does this always elicit negative reactions? And the history of Israel's first thirty-six years amply demonstrates that this is, indeed, the case.

The Six-Day War in June 1967 dealt a body blow to the sanctuary state image. It "normalized" the image nucleus, bringing strength into it

in stunning fashion while pushing the sanctuary aspect out towards the periphery. If the structure of image can be roughly conceptualized as an archery target, with a core surrounded by concentric circles, then the June war brought about a shift that has persisted ever since: the strength element, which was minor and indistinct in the 1948 image model, located somewhere out near the periphery, was propelled into the center by the dimensions and swiftness of the 1967 military victory of the Israeli forces. The sanctuary or refuge role became secondary as immigration to the new state diminished; this image characteristic “travelled” out in the direction of the periphery.

The new image, with its blazing core, caught the imagination of the media. Suddenly the Israeli soldier emerged as the pictorial symbol of the state, instead of the famous pre-state air view of the pioneer agricultural settlement, Nahalal. From 1967 on, the covers of international news magazines would represent Israel either by some symbol of Israeli military might or (as is customary for other countries as well) by its political leaders. Somehow, a picture of a scientist holding a test tube never came to symbolize the state whose first president founded one of the world’s outstanding scientific research institutes.

Again, the reason lies in the psychological dissonance aroused by the power component in view of the underlying historic victim stereotype. Yet this dissonance, while surfacing from time to time as Israel flexed its military muscle, remained within tolerable limits for a long while. Perhaps this can be ascribed to the fact that, while the strength component set off dissonance in various quarters, it coexisted with other characteristics — democracy and morality being the most significant — which Israel’s supporters, Jewish and non-Jewish, continued to identify with. As long as these central characteristics continued to flourish — elections were held regularly, the party system was genuine, freedom of speech, press and religion were all realities — the dissonance created by Israel’s new-found might and, particularly, its retention of the West Bank and Sinai after the 1967 War constituted a problem, but a manageable one when handled diplomatically.

Thus, “normalization” of the image was accomplished in 1967, but at a price. Approval of strength would henceforth be increasingly conditional on other aspects of the image being maintained, which would make Israeli might palatable.

II.

Classic Zionism had always suffered from a tragic blind spot in regard to the contemporary inhabitants of the Land of the Bible. The hold of the past on the Jewish world-view throughout centuries of dispersion was so strong that the Return to Zion was felt to be an imminent possibility, indeed, a highest value, to be prayed for and aspired to. It

never occurred to Zionist theorists, any more than to their pious forebears, that, meanwhile, other people had occupied the ancestral homeland from which the Romans had ejected them.

There were elements in the pre-World War II Jewish community of Palestine, including Judah Magnes and Martin Buber, who advocated a binational state that would embody the legitimate national aspirations of both Arabs and Jews, but they were a minority. In the Arab community, the extremists, led by the British-appointed Mufti of Jerusalem, systematically (and literally) eliminated the moderates who favored establishing a *modus vivendi* with the Jews. The latter, radicalized by shock at the growing dimensions of the Holocaust, defined the political goal of the Zionist movement for the first time in the 1942 Biltmore Program as full independence for the Jewish population of Palestine.

Confronted by two claimants to the same territory, the British, after failing for two and a half decades in their attempt to divide and rule (and, towards the end, to involve the United States in their failure) ungraciously dumped the problem on the United Nations. When the General Assembly voted on November 29, 1947 to partition Palestine between the two contenders, it was doing what Dr. Chaim Weizmann had termed (in his testimony before the 1946 Anglo-American Commission on Inquiry) the "least injustice" in the situation. The Jews, thanks to Ben-Gurion's appreciation of the acute necessity for a state, albeit a truncated one, to solve the problem of their homeless brethren, accepted the less-than-ideal decision. The Arabs not only rejected it, but vowed to defeat it by force.

The negativeness of the Arab response led to military defeat and the creation of the Palestine refugee problem. Cynically, the Arab states (save for Jordan) refused to integrate the refugees — as West Germany absorbed those fleeing East Germany and India the Hindus fleeing Pakistan — but compelled them to remain in squalid camps as pawns in their sterile anti-Israel machinations. Thus, by 1967, the Palestinians, out of suffering, frustration and despair, were ready to take the road of violence rather than political accommodation.

Palestinian nationalism found its voice in the 1960s in the form of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The post-Holocaust image of Israel, largely unchallenged since 1947, would now face an attempt to distort and ultimately destroy it by an ever more sophisticated and ruthless enemy with limitless financial resources to back the attempt. One of the PLO's first goals was to change the notion that the problem was, first and foremost, a humanitarian issue. From 1964 on, and especially after the 1967 war, the decision was made to present it as a struggle for national liberation. The world had to be made aware of the fact that the Palestinian Arabs were being denied the same legitimate rights that had been won by the Jordanians, Syrians, Egyptians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Saudis, Yemenis and all of North Africa.

The countermessage to Israel had to be brought forcibly to the attention of governments in the attempt to restore Palestinian rights. This was to be done by capturing the media: the world had arrived at the age of television, and this new tool was to be used to change international opinion. Little by little, Palestinian terror chipped away at the image of Israel, staging incredible spectacles, such as the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. This had been preceded by a spate of airplane hijackings which introduced a new dimension of violence into international relations. The pictorial symbol of the hooded armed revolutionary swept the world after 1968; the checkered keffiyeh of the Palestinian freedom fighter became the "in" item of headgear for European students identifying with the cause.

Not only the 1968 generation of students, but media people and other anti-establishment groups in Europe became more and more sympathetic to the PLO message. Whatever governments were for, they were against: if, officially, Israel had governmental support, these elements were to be found *ipso facto* on the other side of the barricade. Furthermore, in their view, by its supporting role in the 1956 Suez campaign, Israel had thrown in its lot with the colonialist powers. After 1967 it continued to receive massive economic and military assistance from the United States of America, the enemy of all segments of the left, from Stalinist to Trotskyite to Maoist.

Coached by Algerian nationalists, indoctrinated in some cases by Moscow, the Palestinian leadership adopted the heroic stance of the freedom fighter and the tactics of terror. The end would justify the means, and the Israelis, in their intransigence and paranoia, would play into their hands: this was the scenario. And if the old anti-Semitic right would cooperate, so much the better.

The 1970s were a far more turbulent decade in the Israel-Palestinian relationship than the two preceding ones. For much of this period, the PLO's acts of terror reinforced the victim aspect of the Israeli image rather than detracted from it. Not only the Munich massacre but the Ma'alot school bloodbath, the attacks on Galilee agricultural settlements (Kfar Yuval, Shamir, Misgav Am) and towns (Kiryat Shmonah, Nahariya and Bet She'an) and the coastal road attack on an Israeli bus and passenger cars — all were directed against civilians. The PLO followed this mode of operation in order to attract maximum media attention: the more horrible the deed, the more coverage. The fact that sympathy might go to the victims was deemed less important. In the end, the world would realize that the Palestinian problem would not go away. The final result should be for public opinion to blame the victim for standing in the way of history: this was the goal.

While the Palestinians carried on their struggle through terror, the Arab world conducted its anti-Israel vendetta with other weapons. Although Israel won a military victory in 1973 over combined Arab

attackers, the industrial West caved in to the embargo imposed by the oil-producing Arab states. The crisis was more one of distribution than of production, but the message was clear. The Arab world would not hesitate to use its oil weapon to attain the political goal of delegitimizing and ultimately destroying Israel. The nerves of government in Western Europe cracked: DeGaulle had switched sides after 1968, so that France under Pompidou and Giscard was anti-Israel in any case. England, Germany and Italy now were competing for petrodollar investments and industrial contracts. The anti-Israel slide of the EEC got under way.

Public opinion in those years was less corruptible. American anger at the 1973 oil embargo was turned against the Arabs, who, in any case, had never aroused any great support in the general public. Opinion polls consistently showed support for Israel ranging between 30-50%, depending on the state of relations between Washington and Jerusalem. Enthusiasm for the Arab world rarely rose as high as 15%. Only the emergence of Sadat changed this picture: after his 1977 visit to Jerusalem captured the mass imagination (and the television screen, thanks to Cronkite and Barbara Walters), his popularity exceeded that of Begin. But Arabs, in general, usually stereotyped as camel-riding sheikhs in a desert full of oil barrels, were not particularly liked.

For a long time, European public opinion was more supportive of Israel than were European governments, but the trendy media people joined the pro-Palestinian ideologists among their colleagues and portrayed Israel unceasingly, in the 1970s, as the brutal overlord of the occupied West Bank. Dayan's eye patch was not always sympathetically caricatured. Long before Begin defeated the Labor government, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin were labelled "intransigent" by the media. From the mid-1970s onwards, throughout the Lebanese civil war and afterwards, Israel's Christian allies there were pejoratively labelled "rightists" by the BBC, thus indicating the bias of its staff. Moslems were all "leftists" and the PLO never "terrorists" but "guerrillas" or "freedom fighters." (Of course, the IRA were, and are, "terrorists".) Gradually, the image of Israel as the underdog, the victim of Arab aggression and PLO terror, was replaced by the image of the illegal occupier of the West Bank who deserves to be hit by all means, fair or foul.

Slowly but surely the PLO countermesssage penetrated the political establishment. The Conservative Party in Britain had always had its Arabists. The Liberal Party, taking its cue from young David Steele, became more and more antagonistic to Israel. Dundee became the PLO's bailiwick in the Labor Party. Under Giscard, France reached a near-rupture of relations with Israel. Austria's Kreisky, although offering transit to Jews coming out of the USSR, feuded intermittently with Israel's leaders. In Scandinavia, Olof Palme led the parade of pro-Palestinians among the Socialists.

Despite valiant rear-guard efforts by the Israel Labor Party, the

Socialist International, which until the 1970s was solidly pro-Israel, became more and more open to the PLO's call for Palestinian self-determination. Willy Brandt became disenchanted with Israel. PLO offices opened all over Europe, even though the same governments that were willing to allow Palestinian political representation had set up anti-terrorist units to cope with the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Red Brigades and other PLO-trained revolutionaries.

The EEC had no mandate from the people to identify with the Arab cause, but European foreign policy had never been formulated in response to public opinion to the degree that American policy was. The EEC's Venice Declaration, at the close of the decade, was the logical culmination, based on economic opportunism, of the drift that had set in after 1973. And the Carter Administration encouraged the Europeans to do what it dared not: to tilt against Israel.

The PLO message triumphed in yet another arena with the passage of the "Zionism is racism" resolution at the UN General Assembly in 1975. Step by step the PLO, with the aid of hired ex-diplomats and public relations firms in Britain and the United States, proceeded with its campaign to delegitimize Israel in the eyes of the international community. With Communist bloc and Third World help, repeated attempts were made to oust Israel from membership in international bodies, and failing that, to censure it (UNESCO, ILO, WHO). Although the goal of expelling Israel from the United Nations was not achieved, a secondary aim was realized: Israel has been made an international pariah, second only to South Africa. The sanctuary state created in 1948 has vanished from the minds of the world's diplomats.

III.

Thus, by the time the decade of the 1980s began, the two messages had coalesced: both governments and media were conveying the image of an Israel that, at best, was an errant member of the international community and, at worst, was the truculent perpetrator of a monumental historic injustice that threatened the peace of the world.

Far from receiving credit for signing the Camp David agreement in 1979, Israel was the object of media scepticism and governmental pressures concerning implementation of the pact's autonomy provisions. Internal dissension in Israel contributed to the confusion, for, as the time for fulfillment of the final stage in the return of Sinai to Egypt drew near, the revolt of the ultras against the Begin government captured the media. The fact that Israel was fulfilling its obligations, however painful, under the agreement was so overshadowed by the protest that little positive reaction was elicited. Western newsmen candidly admitted that a double standard existed in any case: if Israel fulfilled its promises, this was only to be expected, but if Arabs did not, this was no surprise. If Israel

returned Sinai, this was the way a democratic state honored its treaty obligations. No praise was in order.

Another element in the souring of governments and media towards Israel at the beginning of the decade was the behavior of Prime Minister Begin during his reelection campaign in 1981. Whether or not the reason lay in the domestic need to project the image of an energetic leader, the quarrels picked by Begin with Carrington, Giscard, Kreisky and, particularly, with Helmut Schmidt incensed public opinion in Europe. In the latter case, particularly, Wehrmacht veterans all felt insulted when he brought up the subject of the German Army's role in the Holocaust. The Israeli leader's fixation on the World War II period was likewise resented by the post-war generation, many of whom had no inhibitions about saying that they did not have to atone for the sins of their fathers.

Insofar as national leaders symbolize their nations, Begin came to be caricatured more and more savagely in the world press. Many political cartoons turned his facial features into replicas of *Der Stürmer* drawings, adding a skullcap and Star of David for easier recall of the latent anti-Semitic image. The paranoia so evident in the Israeli leader's reaction to international media criticism was justified on this score: the caricaturists were really out to get him.

Since Begin was so massively unpopular with the media, it was no surprise that many elements outside of Israel hoped for a Labor victory in 1981, not least in order to stop the erosion of support for Israel. When, by the narrowest of margins, Labor failed to win (10,000 votes kept it from a majority), this development signalled open season on Israel should it "misbehave," i.e., exercise power in a way that others disapproved of. The element of strength in the core of the national image was becoming super-problematic.

Even the advent of an administration in Washington that was more inclined than any previous one to view Israel as a strategic asset in the global anti-Soviet lineup did not alter the media's bent to be critical rather than supportive. The West Bank issue was always there to remind public opinion that the Palestinians had a just grievance, as yet unresolved. Tire-burning became the visual symbol of protest just as armed Israeli soldiers chasing stone-throwing youths became the visual symbol of conquest. West Bank disturbances always rated front page coverage no matter what other events were occurring on the international scene. Evidently, the exercise of Israeli power caused too much dissonance to allow the story to be buried on an inside page.

Constant TV screening of West Bank footage gradually eroded the original Israeli image as the land of refuge. The new Israel was one-dimensional. Only its military prowess rated coverage, and only for negative reasons. Even the 1981 elections were written up with this angle in view: it was not the fact that Israel was conducting a genuinely democratic election campaign which received emphasis, but the opinion that, no mat-

ter what the outcome, there would be little change in policy towards the Arabs. Thus, the stage was set for the media's demonization of Israel that took place in the summer of 1982 as the culmination of an image reversal which had taken thirty-five years to accomplish.

IV.

The fluctuations in Israel's popularity during the three and a half decades of its existence have left their mark on Diaspora Jewry. Whereas Jews in 1948 could not imagine a world in which there would be a Jewish state, today they are incapable of imagining one without it. And, yet, the Diaspora psyche is a vulnerable one. At its inception, Israel was a desperate necessity and, as such, received support from most Jews out of a deep feeling of obligation to aid those who had survived the Nazi bestiality. This support also had an admixture of guilt for not having shared their suffering. In any case, it was a matter of taking care of one's own, especially since no one else in the international community displayed much concern for the victims (except for the United States, which provided humanitarian and economic aid). However, positive motivation for support was lacking, something which would add to Jewish dignity.

Interestingly enough, the deathblow to anti-Zionism within the Jewish community did not come with the creation of the state in 1948, but only in 1967. That June's stunning display of military strength became a source of pride which enabled identification even on the part of the most assimilated Diaspora Jew. The very quality in the Israeli image which caused dissonance to Christians exalted the spirit of Jews. Quite simply, Israeli strength was compensation for Diaspora vulnerability.

Not only was the notion of Jews being able to fight back and fight well an appealing one for Jews living as an exposed minority all over the world; the "tough Jew" image also elicited compliments from many non-Jews. (The normal desire to back a winner in a conflict was perhaps intensified by the notion that here an underdog had triumphed.) What better curative for the poor self-image of a minority than to have the majority indicate its approval and admiration? Here the *realpolitik* appreciation for might was therapeutic. It enabled many Jews who, until then, had felt their Jewishness a burden and Israel merely a wretched almshouse to see it and themselves in a new and positive light (albeit through non-Jewish eyes) and rediscover their own self-pride.

The support for Israel which now characterizes Diaspora Jews, Zionist and non-Zionist, is not a political matter. It has become part of their psychological makeup, their Jewish identity. They all sense what a French Jew said in 1981, "When Israel is weak, Jews are weak; when Israel is strong, Jews everywhere are strong."

The Yom Kippur War, therefore, was a shock to all Jews. The surprise attack on October 5, 1973 and the difficult days which followed,

until Israel was able to mount a counterattack, terrified the Diaspora. The refusal of many European nations to allow American planes with arms for Israel to land and refuel en route rekindled memories of refugees fleeing the Nazis, with no one willing to help. The feeling of confidence and strength awakened by the 1967 victory was a fragile plant, indeed, vulnerable to every chill in the international atmosphere.

But worse was yet to come. The Arab states imposed an oil embargo in an attempt to force a political solution to the Middle East conflict that would be to their advantage. Now, not only Israel was on the firing line. Local Jewish communities could become the object of opprobrium, of guilt by association with that country which, by its very existence, was causing inconvenience and dislocation to the entire industrialized world.

In Europe, the rush to placate the Arabs was unanimous, save for Holland. The remnants of European Jewry, who had preferred to remain on the continent where their families were wiped out, again were exposed to extremist threats. In the United States, Jewish insecurity was epitomized in the story that bumper stickers had appeared on cars bearing the slogan "Burn Jews, not oil." The strange thing was that no one relaying the information had seen the sticker himself — it was usually a cousin or friend somewhere else who had. Whether the sticker really existed or not is irrelevant: the story demonstrates that Diaspora vulnerability, physical and psychological, still exists.

As the world economy reeled in shock from the oil embargo and the ensuing price rise, both Israel and the Diaspora began to realize that perhaps Theodor Herzl had been over-optimistic. Instead of being a shield for Jews everywhere, might not Israel now cause the resurgence of anti-Semitic attitudes and behavior? DeGaulle had shown the way in 1968 when, in attempting to justify France's policy switch in favor of the Arabs, he turned to an anti-Semitic stereotype in order to justify his criticism of Israel. "*Les juifs*," he said, "*sont . . . un peuple d'élite, sûr de lui-même et dominateur*." Here we have both the connection between the old stereotype and the new state, and its invidious implications as well.

In 1973, the oil threat caused the industrial world to think twice about its support for Israel if the price were to be its crippling and not merely its discomfort. The countermesssage thus acquired another, and very threatening, dimension. The international media began to transmit not only the message of PLO terror but of OPEC as well. The combination was enough to cow governments into submission and enable Arafat's swashbuckling appearance at the UN General Assembly, pistol in his belt, in the name of justice for the Palestinians. When that body passed its "Zionism is racism" resolution in 1975, no Jew anywhere could be indifferent to such a calumny. The antennae of Jewish insecurity registered the earthquake in the international atmosphere all too clearly. Gone was UN approval for the sanctuary state; here was the first step in its delegitimization.

The battered Diaspora self-image was partially restored by the successful Entebbe rescue mission on July 4, 1976. Here, again, was a stunning display of Israeli strength used in unexceptionable fashion — to rescue victims of terror. The world's approval for both the professional and moral aspects of the episode was balm for the Jewish psyche. (In Israel it was the success of the operation itself, not international approval, which restored national pride.) But the erosion in Israel's image abroad was only temporarily halted.

Menachem Begin's accession to power in 1977 created a situation not only for American Jews in particular, but for other Diaspora communities as well, which they had never faced before. His slashing *ad hominem* political style was not that of the old Labor Party leadership, nor were his confrontation politics with Israel's staunchest supporter, the United States. The Carter Administration's pro-Arab tilt led it to declare all Jewish settlement on the West Bank illegal as well as undesirable. Begin did not ignore this (as had previous Labor governments) but made a point of announcing the creation of new settlements as an act of defiance. As his media image became more and more negative, the Jews became more and more sensitive to the hostile political environment.

The tension between the Carter Administration and the Begin government over the West Bank caught American Jewry squarely in the middle. It was the first issue over which any significant segment of the organized Jewish community parted ways with any Israeli government. Some of the Jewish organizations disapproved of new settlements in populated Arab areas. However, reluctance to interfere in internal Israeli politics caused their leaders to become tongue-tied in the Prime Minister's presence (in addition to their respect for the office itself, which inhibited criticism). Awareness of the dangers of expressing an anti-Israel position on the American scene caused the same leaders to mute their criticism of Israeli policy in their contacts with the White House.

The dilemma was to persist, with turns for the better and for the worse, into the next decade. The lesson drawn from it, however, was novel in the post-1948 experience: the necessity to divorce support for the state and people of Israel from support for a specific government of the hour. Just as friendship towards Britain did not depend on whether Conservatives or Laborites were in power, Diaspora Jewry had to learn that, no matter which party — Labor or Likud — would win an election, support for Israel was something above party politics.

There was no ambivalence in the American Jewish leadership when the question of arms for Saudi Arabia arose in 1978. Opposing any threat to Israel's security was the traditional role of the pro-Israel lobby in Washington which had developed in the first thirty years of Israel's existence. The line was always that support for a strong Israel was in America's interest. The Carter Administration, while proclaiming its adherence to this position, was more anxious to secure Saudi cooperation in lessening

OPEC pressure on the economies of the West. Therefore, it advocated the sale of F-15 fighter planes and forced a showdown with Israel's supporters in Congress.

Neither the Israeli government nor the American Jewish leadership wanted this testing of their political clout: to defeat the Administration would cast a shadow over future relations, but to be defeated by it would be even worse, because then Israel's opponents would be freed of all constraints in the future. The Begin government, hesitant to engage in the fray, did not give a clear signal to contest the Carter policy until the very last moment. By then, the American Jewish organizations had decided on their own that they had no alternative but to fight the sale, but they mobilized too late. The Saudis got their planes.

Jewish leadership was deeply shaken. The emergence of a monied, influential pro-Saudi lobby was out in the open, and the eagerness of official policy makers and the business community to go along with it filled the organized Jewish community with foreboding. (The full power of the military-industrial complex was subsequently brought to bear in pushing through the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia in 1981, but this was accomplished only by putting the new President's prestige on the line.)

The problem that Israel was causing for American Jews did not vanish during the negotiations that preceded the signing of the Camp David agreements. The media, responsive to the official line, repeatedly inveighed against Israeli intransigence during the negotiations. Sadat was a television personality *par excellence*; Begin came in a poor second. Although the award of the Nobel peace prize to both leaders cast a temporary glow over the states involved, it did not change the basic situation. If Israel and the United States (or any other power, for that matter) were to engage in confrontation politics, the Diaspora communities would be caught in the crossfire. Worse yet (as transpired in Europe), they might become the target of overt anti-Semitism.

V.

The Lebanon war that began in June 1982 was additional confirmation of the hypothesis that Israeli strength causes dissonance in a way that the power element in the image of other nations does not. Further, it demonstrated conclusively that the only way to keep this dissonance within tolerable bounds is to insure that the element of might is linked to moral behavior. The moment that the moral dimension is removed, the dissonance rises to unbearable levels. When the anti-Israel climate of opinion reaches the extreme pitch that it did during the war in Lebanon, the fallout affects Diaspora Jewish communities internally and externally: internally, in shaken morale and alienation, externally, in overt acts of anti-Semitic violence. Physical attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions

are a way of forcing the traditional victim back into the role from which Israel had tried to liberate him.

The international media carried a double message during the Lebanon war in the summer of 1982. First, the television footage of the bombing of Beirut all but destroyed the image of Israel as a moral power. Secondly, it conveyed the PLO countermessage in full. The written media elaborated on both these themes.

Government and media messages reinforced each other. The United States government, especially after the replacement of Haig by Shultz, did not hesitate to tell the Israelis not to go into West Beirut. President Reagan himself reportedly remonstrated with Prime Minister Begin on the telephone. The U.S. media echoed the official point of view. Elsewhere, the EEC countries were united in their criticism of Israel's actions in Lebanon. The European media went beyond their governments in the verbal and pictorial violence of their anti-Israel news presentation.

Anti-Israel opinion peaked three times during the long tragic summer of 1982 in Lebanon: first, after the initial June drive of the Israeli army, with the taking of Tyre and Sidon, involving destruction of the refugee camps at Ein Hilweh and Rashidiyeh; second, after the August bombing of West Beirut, which, although it broke the PLO, was seen as unnecessarily brutal; and finally, after the Phalangist massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps of Beirut in September.

Comparisons to the firebombing of Dresden or the dropping of the H-bomb on Hiroshima were commonplace. The adjective "Nazi-like" appeared in dozens of dispatches describing the Israeli army. After the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps, perpetrated by Lebanese Christian forces in revenge for the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the Israeli bystanders were placed by the media in the same category as the murderers — so complete was the demonization of Israel's military machine by then.

A remarkable change in the tone of the international coverage occurred after the mass demonstration in Tel Aviv against the massacre. The reaction to the sight of 350,000 Israelis demanding a judicial inquiry into the tragic event was almost one of shock, so firmly had the world convinced itself that all Israelis were devils. Media treatment during June, July and August had wiped out the qualities of decency or human feeling as applicable to Israelis. Now, suddenly, there was a need to explain this outburst of public feeling, of moral responsibility in Israel, which in its scale has never been matched in any other democracy. (Had one-sixth of the adult population of any other country ever taken to the streets in war-time against its government?)

President Reagan quoted a television commentator who said of the demonstration, "This tells us that the Israelis are still a moral people," in expressing his relief that the "old Israel" he supported was still there. This

is what American television had done to Israel's image during the war: with its sensationalism, its love of violence and drama, its oversimplifying of the complex, its emotionality, television had transmogrified Israel into a callous, megalomaniac, immoral garrison state, "imperial Israel," in the judgment of TV anchor man John Chancellor.

To many elements in the public, the "imperial" image was intolerable. Reports of recrudescing anti-Semitism began streaming in from all over the United States to Jewish defense organizations: stories of Jewish school children being taunted by classmates, of neighbors who stopped inviting Jewish friends, of church sermons querying Jewish support for Israel. If George Ball could impugn the loyalty of Jewish fellow citizens to the United States because of their pro-Israel stance, and do so on coast-to-coast television, then all verbal attacks on Jews were legitimized. No critic had to feel himself guilty of anti-Semitism if everyone else was saying the same thing! It had become the accepted norm, thanks to the media.

The European Diaspora felt even more cruelly the fallout from extreme media bias in the representation of the Lebanon war. Popular anti-Semitism, never too far below the surface, raised its head in the form of subway graffiti and banners at football games as the anti-Israel climate created during the summer was reinforced by open French and Italian government support for the PLO. The Pope's receiving Arafat was interpreted as legitimizing not only the Palestinian cause but anti-Semitism as well. Therefore, the outrages against the Jewish restaurant in Paris and the Synagogue in Rome, to name only two, were not unexpected.

For overt anti-Semitism to flourish, a permissive atmosphere is necessary. Such a climate was created by the media and strengthened by governmental encouragement for the PLO. The Lebanon war, however, merely gave them the golden opportunity to step up a campaign which already was under way. The sanctuary state had apparently become a crazy state: it was powerful but did not use its power as others would have it do. Therefore, no holds were barred in demonizing it, even to the ultimate obscenity of Nazifying Israel. Would this result have been achieved even without the war in Lebanon?

VI.

This analysis would be incomplete without some reference to the Israeli self-image. In 1948 Israelis knew very well that they were not a military power but a small, poorly armed people fighting with their backs to the wall against five invading Arab armies. The pre-state population was far more homogeneous in origin (mostly Central and Eastern European) and political goals (a society built on social justice, a democratic form of government) than it ever was again after the attainment of independence. Idealism characterized the stratum of the population that set the

tone for the country. Extremes of income did not exist, the life style was simple, everyone knew everyone else in the small backwater that was Jewish Palestine. Waves of immigrants had come to drain the swamps and make the desert bloom; many had left when the struggle became too harsh. Those who remained had a unique devotion to the land and to the society being created there. They were acutely aware of their historic role in reviving Jewish life in its ancient setting.

Because of this sense of history and devotion to the Zionist enterprise, the flower of Israeli youth gave their lives in the independence struggle. For the same reasons, the nation willingly took upon itself the economic sacrifices entailed by the overnight absorption of Jewish refugees whose number equalled the original population. This meant the imposition of an austerity regime and massive investment of national resources in the absorption effort, especially in housing for newcomers. Only a highly motivated people united by a strong sense of common destiny could have succeeded in such a task. It is the diluting of this dimension of idealism which is most regretted by those who lament the change in Israel's self-image over the years. Today Israel is far closer to the materialistic consumption-oriented Western society than to the 1948 model. Yet the same extraordinary sense of unity and purpose does seem to manifest itself still in times of crisis.

Beyond this change in values, there has been a change in the Israelis' self-view of their might. Before 1967, Israelis did not feel that they were a power. In fact, they were desperately unsure of themselves on the eve of the Six-Day War. They were well aware that the War of Independence had been a terrible bloodletting, and that the refugees who subsequently found homes in Israel were untried as soldiers. Ben-Gurion warned Rabin before the outbreak of the war that he might well be endangering the existence of the state, so uncertain was he of the ability of Israel's armed forces.

The relief and euphoria of the Israelis at the evidence of their military prowess in 1967 stemmed from a haunting sense of insecurity. Therefore, they fell in love with the "Super-Jew" image, invented in the Diaspora after the 1967 victory as a heartwarming in-joke, reflecting pride in the battling brothers who could hit back. Revulsion at Diaspora vulnerability was, after all, the wellspring of much Zionist motivation. The philosophy of Jabotinsky and his Revisionist party, to which Menachem Begin is heir, exalts the notion of Jewish military might for that very reason. Begin and many of his generation still view the world through the prism of Jewish ghetto weakness transformed into strength.

The suspicion that too many Israelis today worship might as an end in itself, rather than regarding it as a means to insuring the survival of a state that embodies certain values, was raised as an issue in the 1981 elections. As political opinions polarized, more and more reference was made to "two cultures," namely, the contrasting paths of the democratic-

socialist and the nationalist-mystic philosophies represented by the Labor and Likud parties. The first grouping would be inclined to view military power as an essential element in Israel's self-image, but as a necessary evil to be exercised in self-defense. The second grouping also sees power as essential but as a positive good to be used in the attainment of political goals in the region. The Lebanon war is an illustration of the latter point of view.

In both cases, Israelis like to think of themselves as humanitarian and moral human beings. The Israel Defense Forces have a tradition, dating back to the days of the Haganah underground army, called "purity of arms," which means that weapons may not be used against innocent enemy civilians, to the extent that such action can be prevented. Many stories of casualties caused to Israeli soldiers because of their reluctance to use arms against the civilian population were documented in this most recent war, as in all previous ones. In testimony before the judicial commission investigating the Sabra-Shatila massacre, numerous soldiers and officers made reference to the different standards of behavior of the IDF and the Phalangist forces. This self-demand for moral behavior was behind the explosion of protest that filled the Tel Aviv square with 350,000 demonstrating Israelis after the Beirut massacre. Morality is still a prominent component of the national self-image.

However, Israelis have a fateful decision ahead of them which directly involves two other key elements of the national self-image, the Jewishness of the state and its democratic nature. Annexation of the West Bank (or, Biblical Judaea and Samaria) and the Gaza Strip, with its 1,300,000 Palestinian Arab population, raises the problem in a way that cannot be ignored. If the territories are annexed, the proportion of Jews to Arabs in this enlarged Israel will be roughly $3\frac{1}{2}:2$. In view of the higher birth rate of the Palestinians, this ratio will become more and more unfavorable to the Jewish majority as time goes on.

Only by denying the Palestinians their due representation in the Knesset, after they are annexed, can the Jewish majority be safeguarded — but this would destroy the democratic nature of the state. On the other hand, if the Palestinians are accorded proportional representation, Israel will be in danger of losing its distinguishing quality, its Jewish character. It will then no longer constitute the heart of Jewish existence but will become, at first, a binational state and, subsequently, an Arab state which will merge into the Moslem Middle East landscape.

The only way to avoid such a Catch-22 situation is to refrain from annexing the Arab population, and, with it, most of the territory of the West Bank and Gaza: this is the declared policy of the Labor opposition. The Likud government in power today, however, advocates territorial annexation without clarifying how it proposes to deal with the problem of democratic representation of the Arab population. Evasion of the issue

raises squarely the question of the significance of the democratic element in the national self-image of the Prime Minister and his followers.

The choice to be made will indelibly affect the national self-image. For the decision will reflect not only the significance that the government places on democracy and morality, but the emphasis that the people of Israel attach to these elements in their notion of themselves.

VII.

What the PLO has not been tempted to achieve through paradox (that is, the creation of a Palestinian state as the result of annexation by Israel), it has tried to accomplish through armed struggle and propaganda. The Lebanon conflict was marked by a massive public relations effort to achieve image reversal, i.e., to have the Palestinians replace the Israelis as victims of persecution. The terrorist aspect of the PLO image was deliberately effaced: Arafat embarked on a baby-kissing campaign for the benefit of the media, who uncritically transmitted this Big Lie all over the world. The memory of the Israeli civilian population exposed to PLO raids, huddled in shelters in Galilee against Katyusha rocket attacks, was obliterated. Now the Israelis were transformed into demons as the hooded PLO freedom fighter image was played down.

If this image reversal represents a propaganda achievement — the illegitimate but successful manipulation of the victim image into a satanic threat, accomplished with the cooperation of the media — it should be noted that the truer psychological reality is the gradual creation of a mirror image over time. Both Israelis and Palestinians view each other as an existential threat (by making war on the PLO in Lebanon, Sharon elevated them to the status of a full-fledged power). Because each side views the other as aggressive, it sees its own acts as defensive. Neither appreciates how much the other genuinely fears it.

Even the cognitive contents of the two images mirror each other. Many Israelis regard the Palestinians as possibly the most intelligent of all the Arab communities. They are perceived as valuing education, hardworking, devoted to family, upwardly mobile. Palestinians see these same characteristics in the Israelis, although they still feel a strong sense of inferiority. Both peoples are devoted to the land, and are determined not to surrender an inch to the other. (West Bank Arabs have taken to planting trees on untilled land in order to preserve their claim to title, just as the Jews of Mandatory Palestine did through the instrumentality of the Jewish National Fund.) Both peoples have their Diasporas.

The war in Lebanon enriched this slowly developing mirror image in curious fashion. The threat perception, fear and even hatred are diluted today by a real sympathy for the suffering of the Palestinians in the camps on the part of Israelis who saw them firsthand and on the television screen. For many years, the refugees had been an unseen enemy — only

the terrorists were visible. On the other hand, these very Palestinians have a real appreciation today of the humanity of the Israeli soldiers who brought them medical care and bread. The proof came when they begged the Israelis not to leave them to the mercy of the Phalangists. Perhaps more face-to-face contact — and in less tragic circumstances — would enable both sides to realize that the devil that has been painted for thirty-six years is not the real face of the “enemy.”

As for the image of Israel in the international community, it has undergone great alteration since 1948. The obduracy of the Arabs, who still refuse to acknowledge its right to exist, forced it into the role of a military power. Events, changes in policy by governments and media treatment have all combined to make power the dominant element in Israel's image in place of the 1948 haven of refuge. This is not likely to diminish in the near future. Whether this power will be perceived positively in the years ahead depends on whether the ancillary components of morality and democracy will continue to coexist with it. The ability of other democracies to identify with Israel depends in no small measure on the continued centrality of these two vital characteristics. Morality and democracy are equally essential for the ability of Diaspora Jews to identify with Israel and defend it against the attacks of a hostile environment.

This, in effect, is the image of Israel after thirty-six years of independence: one sharply differentiated in content from that of the traditional Jewish stereotype yet indissolubly linked to it. Instead of the vulnerable 1948 sanctuary state, Israel is now perceived primarily as a military power. The explosion of opprobrium which took place as the result of the war in Lebanon bespeaks the persistence of something different, something unique about Israeli power in the minds of non-Jews that does not apply to other nations.

The Reform Rabbinate and Israel

JOSHUA O. HABERMAN

AS WE ALL KNOW, IT WAS ONLY AFTER Hitler was established in power and the destruction of European Jewry had already begun that American Reform Judaism recanted its former denial of Jewish peoplehood. The longstanding declaration of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, "we consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community," was replaced by the reaffirmation of Jewish peoplehood in the Columbus Platform of 1937. Even then, the rehabilitation of Jewish nationhood did not have the support of an overwhelming majority of the Reform rabbinate, but barely squeezed through with the smallest possible margin of a single vote which was cast by the Chairman, Felix Levy, to break a tie.¹

At Columbus, Reform affirmed only the centrality of Jewish peoplehood, not the centrality of the land of Israel, declaring: "Judaism is the historical religious experience of the Jewish people." It acknowledged the land as *a* (not "the") Jewish homeland and asserted the obligation of all Jews to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also *a* (not "the") center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.

Now, forty-seven years after Columbus and the thirty-sixth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, Reform has come a long way in its identification with the State, as fully as any other segment of organized Diaspora Jewry. Reform Jews see themselves as partners in the upbuilding of Israel. Educationally, Israel permeates much of their curriculum. Religiously, their liturgy, as it evolved in the *Gates of Prayer*, reflects the ties with Israel. Politically and economically, the Reform Rabbinate is no less supportive of Israel than are any of their colleagues in the other branches of Judaism.

Nonetheless, there are serious questions which are implicit in that relationship:

1. How does the State of Israel affect Reform Judaism and its rabbinate?
2. How does, or should, Reform Judaism and its rabbinate affect the State of Israel?

1. See my article, "The Place of Israel in Reform Jewish Theology," JUDAISM, XXI, 4 (Fall 1972): 437-448.

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1. The Impact of the State of Israel on Reform Judaism

The existence and the achievements and the political struggle of the State of Israel confront the Reform rabbinate with essentially one issue: the meaning of Jewish peoplehood.

There are two options. In the first place, one can define the Jewish people in purely secularist terms. Accordingly, one can speak of the Diaspora communities as ethnic minorities whose national center is the State of Israel. In this perspective, the State of Israel boils down to an essentially political concern and its primary importance would be as a factor in Jewish survival, — a political asset or liability. Could one ever fault Israel for acting purely in terms of its political self-interest as do other nations? By what right would one expect the State to do anything but act and react within the dynamics of power? Israel would then be a nation just like other nations and of no particular significance as a model of Jewish values.

There is another option. It is to include the State of Israel within a religious concept of Jewish peoplehood. As a matter of fact, in Reform's identification with Zionism and its endorsement of the legitimacy of Jewish statehood in Israel, it has never abandoned its historic self-image as a worldwide *religious* community. As long as Reform sees the Jewish people, here and in Israel, as both creator and creature of the religion of Judaism, it is impossible for it to embrace a wholly secularist view of Jewish statehood. This fact then creates the necessity of thinking through the religious significance of the State of Israel. If, indeed, religious significance is ascribed to it, that significance cannot be left undefined. In this light, the most timely theological issues for the Reform rabbinate are the Covenant, the Chosen People doctrine and Messianism. All hang together. Whatever theology is espoused in Reform Judaism regarding these issues, — what is the religious role of the State of Israel in the light of this theology? The question stands, whether or not one affirms the centrality of the State or recognizes it only as a major center in the totality of Jewish people. If Reform Jews still see themselves as a Covenant people, they not only may, but they must, reaffirm the Chosen People concept together with its Messianic ramifications.

In this light, the religious significance of the State of Israel lies in its preeminent role as the Jewish community which is equipped to express Judaism at all levels. It follows that Israel must be the standard-bearer of Judaism.

As I have previously stated:

In Reform's current view, Jewish sovereign existence in a state of their own is not incompatible with a world-saving task enunciated in prophetic Judaism. Indeed, Judaism's relevance to the shaping of a better society can best be tested in a setting where Jews have both political power and full responsibility. Without expecting the State of Israel to act by standards of perfection suitable to the messianic age, Reform Jews, nevertheless, look to

the State to represent the best of Jewish ethics and idealism within the limitations of political reality.²

If Reform Jews are serious in their high expectations of Israel, another issue arises with ever-growing urgency: the new relevance of Halakhah. Reform, like Orthodoxy, cannot be indifferent to the religious and moral climate of Israeli society. It is not enough that Israel be a democracy and that its laws be enacted democratically by the Knesset. We would expect Israeli law to conform to the demands of Judaism:

The secular world is not the antithesis, but is the very proving ground of the spiritual. For Judaism, this may mean that, having the State of Israel, Jews are now challenged to apply ideals of holiness to the concrete realities of statehood. The characteristic of the Jewish exile was its powerlessness. Powerlessness and irresponsibility go hand-in-hand. Now that the Jewish people have a state of their own, the exercise of power, the use of sovereignty and the shaping of national policy become tests of Judaism.³

By what standards shall one judge the social, economic and political conditions of Israeli life? Clearly, it is not enough to moralize in generalities. Reform rabbis — even as Reform Jews — must resume the age-old Jewish preoccupation with the major and minor facets, even the minutiae, which are required for the creation of a just social and political community. The search for a Jewish religious and moral response to the conditions of personal, social and national life is nothing other than Halakhah. The virtual abandonment of Halakhah by the Reform movement in the pre-Israel era resulted, in my opinion, not from insurmountable theological obstacles to Halakhah as revealed morality, but from its irrelevance in the newly-emancipated Jewish Diaspora. Western Jewry willingly paid the price for emancipation by dissolving the internally autonomous community and submitting to civil law. Halakhic law vanished in Reform Judaism, except for small remnants of ritual tradition which remained relevant to it as a purely “religious” community. That is why the movement’s codes or manuals of Reform Jewish practice, even in the latest and laudable attempt known as *Gates of Mitzvah*, covered little more than customs and ceremonies. However, all this may change as Reform once again comes to grips with the shaping of an autonomous Jewish society in Israel. If this society will allow itself to be governed not just by law, but by *Jewish* law, the revival of Halakhah is a certainty. Furthermore, such a Halakhah, made applicable to the problems of nations in their relationship with one another, would be the only possible standard by which to pass a Jewish moral judgment on Israel’s political behavior.

If this should prove to be the case, a separation of Church and State in the American sense would be not only inappropriate, but contrary to

2. Ibid., p. 448.

3. Ibid., p. 446.

our religious and moral aspirations for the State of Israel. This brings us to the second question:

2. The Impact of Reform Judaism and its Rabbinate upon the State of Israel

The Reform rabbinate, in recent years, has suffered the torments of ambivalence with reference to Israel. On the one hand, overwhelming identification with it; on the other hand, deep discontent with the status, there, of Reform Judaism.

There is disappointment with the negligible growth of Reform in Israel where the constituency has increased at a snail's pace, so blame is put on the official policy of discrimination by the chief rabbinate and the Ministry of Religion. There is a harping on official Israeli intolerance of Reform and a whining about the false promises and betrayals by political friends and so-called allies in the Knesset. The disputed right of Reform rabbis to officiate at weddings in Israel has been made virtually the only rallying cry of the movement in the Jewish State. Many hope impatiently for a total separation of Church and State so as to give Reform the freedom to grow in Israel.

Personally, I believe that the problems of the Reform movement in Israel are far greater. The biggest mistake was the assumption that what worked for Reform in Europe and America would also work for it in Israel. Consequently, Reform has tried to transplant the American model to the Israeli scene. The fact is that Reform never was, nor presently is, an Israeli grassroots movement. It is a religious import. The Rabbi, in his Israeli edition, is supposed to function like an American Rabbi as organizer, preacher, pastor, conductor of services and life cycle ceremonies.

The approach in Israel was essentially pragmatic, just as was true of the American Reform movement. Rabbis worked hard to westernize services aesthetically; they introduced the family pew, the abridged ritual, the organ, the choir, and they stressed decorum — with minimal theological debate. Various Israeli Reform prayer books are essentially revisions of the Reform liturgy in America or England adapted to the Israeli scene. All of this was done on the assumption that many of those discontented with Orthodoxy were waiting for liturgical alternatives.

Practically, Reform counted on the Synagogue as almost the sole vehicle for its propagation except in Haifa, where the Leo Baeck School represents a notable contribution to education, and on Kibbutz Yahel, which is probably the most significant contribution of Reform to Israel at this time.

The revival of Orthodoxy in Israel, especially the spread of the so-called *Baalei T'shuvah* Yeshivot must be seen in contrast with the near stagnation of Reform. It should convince Reform Jews that they are on the wrong track and need to reconsider the basic rationale of a Reform movement in Israel.

I believe that the approach to Reform in Israel was mistaken because the history of the movement was forgotten. Reform arose in early 19th century Europe from two basic motivations: one was political and the other, theological.

The policies of emancipation, which made assimilation extremely attractive, propelled a Reform movement which, in its early days, was marked by a nearly total absence of principle and theological consistency. The pioneering lay leaders were primarily trying to acclimatize Judaism to the western world and make the Synagogue look more like the orderly, understandable Protestant Church of the environment. Rabbis in clerical robes, prayers in a comprehensible language, hymn singing, choirs replacing cantors and an abridged prayer service — these were not only concessions to convenience, but deliberate attempts to integrate Judaism into a non-Jewish world — in short, religious assimilation.

The critics of Reform have not been slow in stressing the assimilationist motivation of the movement in its earlier years. However, there was another motivation which, in all fairness, should be understood and appreciated: it was the new philosophic or theological need of an educated European Jewish intelligentsia which swelled the ranks of early Reform. Under the influence of German idealistic philosophy, especially Hegelianism, some of the leading Reform thinkers, e.g., Geiger, came to think of religion as a progressive spiritual development unfolding in various stages throughout history. With the incredible optimism of the mid-19th century, they thought of mankind as entering then the culmination of spiritual development through identification of the human spirit with the Absolute. Theologically, a key concept, which redefined Judaism and which became the operative principle that helped validate Reform, was that of “progressive revelation.” It enabled the movement to discard much of tradition in a variety of reationalizing games. I say “games” because Reform was hardly consistent. It kept what it liked and discarded what it didn’t like, rationalizing its selective rejection of undesired elements in terms of progressive revelation.

It should be obvious that these intellectual foundations of European Reform are irrelevant to the Israeli Jew and it is this irrelevance, rather than official bureaucratic intolerance, which stands in the way of Reform’s expansion.

As I have already suggested, the optimistic mood of European Jews in the middle of the 19th century made Geiger’s progressive theory very attractive. It meant a retreat from “tribal particularism” in favor of a universalist humanism, gradually transforming religion into morality with a good-riddance to ritual.

In Israel today, and in much of the Diaspora, the current swing is in the opposite direction. The Holocaust has shattered, for many, all dreams of universalism. The transformation of Jews into a nation calls for a new theological priority: a theology of Jewish peoplehood. In this

regard, the Chosen People doctrine of traditional Judaism has much more to offer than does the vague universalism of so-called prophetic faith. Reform mutterings about the Kingdom of God on earth in the approaching messianic age of scientific enlightenment and reason, which marked the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, sound almost funny in the present day apocalyptic stage of history. Those who seek God today, do so not from idle intellectual curiosity, but because life in the 1980s scares them to hell. Their existential need for faith in God is far greater than are the reservations of skeptical rationalism.

The model of the well-disciplined, decorous, American Reform Synagogue is not especially attractive to the Israeli. Even in America, the dimension of worship in Reform congregations is not an overwhelming success story. Those among its constituency who really want to pray often look for something with more emotional grabbing power and personal participation, something more like neo-Hasidism. In Israel, there is virtually no market for the current kind of Reform. Israelis are not worried about decorum, and they need no prayer book revisions for the sake of better comprehension of the text. The Israeli Jew who wants to pray will find the informal, free-flowing Orthodox ritual, with all of its repetition and routine, more expressive of his need than Reform Judaism's regimented worship ritual.

As for the Israeli Reform Rabbi, the kindest way of putting it is that he is largely superfluous. Not that there is no need for inspiring spiritual leadership as an alternative to the official religious bureaucrats of the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate. There is, indeed, an unmet religious or spiritual need, but the Reform rabbis in Israel are not addressing themselves to it. The functions that they have come to assume as Congregational Rabbis are those which any modestly educated Israeli Jew could easily handle as a layman. Reading services, even the Torah, is no great problem there. Conducting a youth group is no rabbinic monopoly. Even running a *shiur* on the weekly Torah portion does not require rabbinic ordination. The Reform rabbis in Israel are neither fools nor frauds; neither are they more or less charismatic and scholarly and eloquent than their American counterparts. But, for Israel, all that is not enough.

What kind of Reform movement does Israel need? Since the potential constituency in Israel is the secularized mass of people, it is necessary to offer them that which Orthodoxy is not able to give. They need help in finding an approach to God which is both intellectually gratifying and also experiential. We must speak to the spiritual hunger of a disenchanting generation which mourns the loss of its ideals and dreams. In the area of worship, we must offer spontaneity, a neo-hasidic kind of fervor — something other than the formalistic prayer habits of the Orthodoxy. Because Israeli society shows signs of urban alienation comparable to metropolitan life all over the world, our ability to create a sense of com-

munity and genuine fellowship within our constituency will be crucial to our success as a movement.

We must develop a method of teaching Biblical and rabbinic texts which will not bury them in Halakhic *pilpul*, but relate these texts to the conditions, problems and dilemmas of personal and communal life. Such an approach calls for rabbis who are primarily teachers, personal counselors and spiritual models who have the intellectual depth and personal piety which inspire faith and serenity. As of this moment, I am not sure that the Reform movement in Israel has such spiritual models and leaders, nor do I believe that the synagogues which are now operating in Israel relate any more to the needs of people than do all the other "shuls."

I referred to Kibbutz Yahel as Reform's most notable contribution to Israeli life. It is notable because it is more than a Synagogue. It is a living community which seeks to be guided by Judaism, not only in worship, but also in the various situations of life. It is different from Orthodoxy insofar as it consults Halakhah "for guidance rather than governance," to use Freehof's felicitous phrase. I believe that Reform Judaism can contribute something to Israeli life, especially through its openness to experimentation and through its commitment to personal choice in religious matters. But I am equally certain that the Reform movement in Israel will find much of the European and American experience in Reform irrelevant to the Israeli situation.

Religious Forerunners of Zionism

MONTY N. PENKOWER

IN REFORMULATING THE NATURE OF JEWISH identity, Zionism as a modern phenomenon did not divorce itself from traditional roots. Logic would not have dictated otherwise for a people whose earliest history was predicated on its exodus from Egypt in order that it could return to the land promised to the biblical Patriarchs in Divine covenant. Even after that people's dispersion, Jewish law and liturgy continued to foster the sense of a vital tie to *Eretz Yisrael*. That unique link was strengthened with blessings for rain in due season in *Eretz Yisrael*; the talmudic study of agricultural practice there; prayers for a speedy ingathering to Zion; and the invocation, at the conclusion of the Passover and Yom Kippur services, "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

The land, understandably, always claimed a Jewish population. Major rabbinic authorities, whatever their theological differences, reflected a prevailing consensus in extolling its virtues. Thus the classic *Kuzari* of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi and his personal poetic yearnings, such as the oft-quoted refrain, "My heart is in the East and I am in the West." Rabbi Moshe Ben Naḥman, (Naḥmanides) emphasized that settlement in the land of the forefathers was a commandment. The Maharal of Prague went further and argued that his co-religionists needed the Land of Israel to end their anomalous existence as a scattered nation. A return to that soil was the center of movements headed by mystics and millenarians, among them Seranus (in the year 720); David Alroy (1147); false messiahs throughout the 12th century in Isfahan, Fez, Cordova, and France; and the 17th century's Shabbetai Tsvi, whose proven apostasy did not prevent many communities from believing in him.

According to the late Israeli historian, Ben Zion Dinur, these various, unceasing efforts inevitably led to the emigration to Palestine of Rabbi Yehuda HeḤasid, who set out in 1770 at the head of a band of some thousand enthusiastic mystics to the Promised Land. Their mission was to pray and fast, and thus hasten the Messiah's coming. Although most of these students of the Kabbalah did not complete their arduous journey, this first "organized immigration" to the ancestral homeland since the inception of the Diaspora marked, in Dinur's view, the beginning of the modern era in Jewish history. The revolt against the on-going exile of the Jewish people then proceeded with the trek to the Holy Land by Rabbi

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Nahman of Bratzlav; the establishment of a community in Tsfat (Safed) by the pupils of Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna; the willingness of Jerusalem's *yishuv* (Jewish settlement) to live, to a large extent, on funds collected among Jews abroad (known as the *halukah*). All of this, in turn, led to later colonization attempts marked far more by what has often been termed "secular messianism," and culminating, with ineluctable momentum, in the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

This conception of Zionism and, at the same time, of Jewish modernity does provide the comfort of continuity. But Dinur and like-minded exponents miss the radical break posited by modern Zionist ideology. Zionism went beyond its Jewish roots by attempting to replace ghetto exclusiveness with a life which fused Emancipation and 19th-century nationalism in order to stake out a "normal," sovereign collective life for the Jewish people that would be on a par with other nations. While the Maharal enjoined Jewry to await a messianic Redemption with patience, Yehuda HeḤasid and his entourage aimed to pray and fast, and Rabbi Nahman focused on the mystical *Eretz Yisrael*. On the other hand, those who came under the influence of their general 18th- and 19th-century milieus began thinking in practical terms. For them, the question was how to organize mass *aliyah* (the word to mean physical and, for the traditionalists, spiritual ascent to Palestine), and what role Jewry would play there. Even the religious forerunners of Zionism, making their appearance in the mid-19th century, reflected the secular impact of their age. Indeed, theirs was the first translation of the traditional legacy into a more contemporary framework.

We may begin to examine that phenomenon with Rabbi Judah Alkalai, who had fallen under the influence of the kabbalists before becoming rabbi of the Sephardic community in Semlin (the capital of Serbia), in 1825. While spending his boyhood in Jerusalem, the Sarajevo-born Jew learned from mystics like Rabbi Eliezer Papo to anticipate the Messiah's arrival. The struggle of three nations — Turkey, Austria, and Serbia — for domination of his native town of Semlin added a second ingredient to the young Alkalai's thoughts regarding the destiny of his people.

As early as 1834, Alkalai's work, *Sh'ma Yisrael* (Listen, Israel), insisted that two factors were essential to bring the final, miraculous Redeemer: self-redemption, defined as the creation of Jewish colonies in the Holy Land, and military conquest under the first Messiah, the descendant of Joseph. Alkalai then met the rabbi of Corfu, Judah Bibas, who introduced him to the idea of a Jewish nation which, like the contemporary Greeks, should be instructed in arms and the sciences in order to obtain independence in Palestine. These various ideas appeared in Alkalai's *Darkhei Noam* (Paths of Pleasantness), a Ladino-Hebrew textbook of 1839 which literally interpreted *teshuvah* (the traditional repentance of each individual as precondition for the Redemption) to mean *shuvah* — the

return of the entire Jewish people to "the land of our fathers." The Jewish nation, according to this radical departure in interpreting the messianic scheme, was thus substituted for the Jewish individual.

The Damascus Affair of 1840, a world-wide *cause célèbre* after some Jews in that city were imprisoned on blood libel charges, sparked Alkalai's activities in marked fashion. The suffering of Syrian Jewry over the accusation (a common canard that began in the Middle Ages) that Jews had killed a Gentile and used his blood for preparing *matzah*, bore a serious lesson for what Alkalai termed "complacent dwellers in foreign lands." As a kabbalist, he viewed the year 1840 as symbolic for the travail supposed to precede the coming of the Messiah (*hevlei Mashiah*). The first Messiah, scion of Joseph, expressed the need, according to Alkalai's *Minhat Yehudah* (1843), for a great Jewish Assembly to organize mass settlement in Palestine. The author arrived at this by linking the Hebrew words *Yosef* (Joseph) and *osef* (ingathering). If the Jewish leaders would organize a company to appeal to the Turkish Sultan for the Land of Israel to be returned in exchange for an annual rent, Alkalai maintained, all of Jewry would respond. In numerous pamphlets, strewn throughout with references to the Bible, Talmud, and other religious sources, he called for the revival of Hebrew, a fund to receive tithes (the Biblical *ma'aser*) for financing settlement, and a Jewish army. The British government, in particular, was asked for support.

Alkalai's efforts bore few results. His appeals to the English financier, Moses Montefiore, and the French-Jewish politician, Adolphe Crémieux, to initiate the Jewish Assembly, much as they had successfully spearheaded the campaign against the Damascus blood libel, went unanswered. The societies for the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael*, which he founded wherever he traveled in Europe, came to nothing. Those dependent on *halukah* funds, as well as leading rabbis — both Orthodox and Reform — attacked his revolutionary schemes, and his last years were spent in Jerusalem, in semi-obscurity.

Alkalai's moderate effect is also reflected in the career of Chayim Lorje, founder of the first society for the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael*. This Orthodox Jew, who claimed both a German university degree and descent from the celebrated kabbalist Rabbi Yitschak Luria (the ARI), announced the establishment of his settlement society in Frankfurt-on-the-Oder in 1860. The European revolutions of 1848, in Lorje's opinion, augured the millenium; return to Palestine would purify his people from the defilement of exile. His German-type efficiency initially produced branches in various parts of Germany and brought in substantial funds, but Lorje's lack of tact and his egocentrism brought about the end of his society by 1865.

Lorje's greatest coup was the recruitment of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and the publication of his manuscript, *Derishat Zion* (Seeking Zion), in 1862. Like Alkalai, the "practical messianism" of this renowned tal-

mudic scholar was premised on the argument that the Messiah would appear only when the Jews had settled in Palestine in large numbers and had founded an autonomous government under the protection of the great European nations. Kalischer's emphasis on natural redemption, in opposition to most of his Orthodox contemporaries, was first revealed in his contact with the international banker Amschel Rothschild in 1836. Territory adjoining Egypt should be purchased from the new regime of Muhammad Ali, he wrote to the uncommitted banker, with tracts ultimately traded for others in the Holy Land. The unsuccessful revolts for independence across the border in the Russian-held part of Poland, which Kalischer witnessed from his vantage point in Thorn, Poland, made their impression on him as well, but not until Lorje organized his society did Kalischer pursue his Zionist convictions. Previously, his writings were devoted to attacks against the Reformers and to writings on the consistency of the dogmas of Judaism with the principles of reason, such as the two-volume *Emunah Yesarah* (Just Faith).

His *Derishat Zion*, the first Hebrew book to appear in Eastern Europe on the subject of modern Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine, was well received by the readers of the nascent Hebrew literature in Eastern Europe. (It would also serve for many years as the basic book to recruit Orthodox circles on the necessity of communal return to *Eretz Yisrael*.) In this volume, as in its successors, *Rishon LeZion* (First in Zion) and *Sha'alu Sh'lom Yerushalayim* (Seek the Peace of Jerusalem), Kalischer explained that agricultural labor on the ancestral soil had much value. It would invigorate the *yishuv* in Palestine; permit greater Torah study and observance of the relevant commandments in the Bible (initial expositions of his thought included animal sacrifices in Jerusalem); and, above all, spur the ultimate Redemption.

Rabbi Kalischer, believing that a new Jewish settlement in the ancient homeland would again enable the people of Israel to become a "light unto the nations," as promised by its prophets of old, organized several Palestine colonization societies. In 1866, one such group bought land for settlement in the outskirts of Jaffa. Four years later, his prodding got the French Alliance Israélite Universelle (organized in 1860 to defend Jewish rights everywhere) to open the Mikveh Yisrael agricultural school in that area, the country's first. Rabbi Nathan Friedland, author of works which paralleled these ideas, sought French and Dutch diplomatic support for Kalischer's cause. Rabbi Joseph Natonek of Hungary, who also travelled to the large West European cities on Kalischer's behalf, became editor, in the early 1870s, of a short-lived Zionist weekly entitled *Das einige Israel*.

Yet Kalischer's vision, too, evoked but a limited response. Pietists and those in the Holy Land who were dependent on charity from abroad denounced his schemes. Self-redemptive settlements, labored on and guarded by Jewish hands, were seen by such individuals as potential seedbeds of heresy. His chastising of fellow Jews for not taking to heart the

example of various contemporary nationalist movements across the European landscape and for not working to enhance both the glory of their ancestors and of God, who chose Zion, did not endear this harbinger of modern Zionism to traditionalist circles.

There were, nonetheless, a few prominent leaders who did adhere to Kalischer's revolutionary point of view, including Rabbis Elias Guttmacher and Azriel Hildesheimer. The former, like his friend Kalischer, had studied under the renowned Rabbi Akiva Eiger, was a respected talmudist, and a student of Kabbalah. At first he assumed that the Redemption of the Jewish people would be hastened if morally superior individuals restored to Israel the Divine presence (*Shekhinah*) which had departed Jewry when it went into exile. Eventually, this Polish rabbi, to whom many West European Hasidim flocked for amulets and advice, came to believe that full moral perfection was unattainable outside of the Land of Israel. Together with Kalischer, whose agricultural program there he eagerly advocated, Guttmacher posited that, in his words, "redeeming the sleeping land from the Arabs" and observing in Palestine the commandments that can be "performed in our day" would heal Jewry's body and soul. In Germany, Azriel Hildesheimer, although sharing the leadership of neo-Orthodoxy with Samson Raphael Hirsch, combined his rabbinical seminary's critical study of Jewish sources with enthusiastic support for the *yishuv* in Palestine. The *Battei Makhseh* buildings in Jerusalem's Old City were erected on his initiative, but his Palestine Society, which he founded in 1872 to raise the educational and vocational standards of Jerusalem's Jews, led the older ultra-Orthodox community in Palestine to excommunicate this modern-traditionalist rabbi. In close contact with Kalischer, Hildesheimer also founded the only newspaper in Germany at the time (the *Jüdische Presse*) favoring the emigration to, and colonization of German Jews in, the Holy Land.

Such minority views found an echo occasionally among the young intellectuals, witness the early career of Yechiel Michael Pines. Fusing religious studies with foreign languages and science, this yeshiva student crossed swords with Jewish Russian Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) personalities like Judah Leib Gordon and Moses Lilienblum when he wrote that the "lessons of experience" could guide the adjustment of Jewry to modernity without sacrificing the essence of its faith and religious practice. *Yaldei Ruhi*, a two-volume collection of articles put out 1872, criticized the proportionless imitation by assimilationists of secular society who thereby abandoned the original character of the Jewish people. Unlike others, he wrote, Jews are a distinct nation bound by Torah and rabbinic precept for the conduct of daily life, and their deep-seated hope for Redemption provides the strongest evidence of a people's will to live eternally.

Once he had settled in Jerusalem in 1878 as the representative of the London-based Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund, it was natural that, despite the ultra-Orthodox there, Pines should press for artisan and

industrial projects, agricultural colonization, and new housing. A Jewish national community in Palestine could be organized according to the norms of traditional religion, he consistently argued in subsequent years.

Alkalai, Kalischer, and their circle enjoyed no vogue amongst East European Jewry. The traditionally-inclined masses there, given their anxiety over religious apostasy by many of the educated youth and over the Czar's thinly veiled conversionist schemes via the secularization of Jewish education, feared any movement which smacked of modernity. Modernists, on the other hand, while not sharing Peretz Smolenskin's attachment to Jewish tradition, agreed with that *maskil* (a Jewish herald of Enlightenment values) that the evolution of Western Jewry would soon be repeated in the East. After all, Alexander II had ended his father's dreaded system of military cantonment (the forced 6-year pre-conscription of children, leading to their religious conversion), and allowed for greater freedom of education and movement out of the Pale.

This optimistic strain is best reflected in the views of Judah Leib Gordon, the foremost Russian poet of the *Haskalah*. Caught up in the liberal spirit which swept his country after the Czar's liberation of the serfs, the thirty-two-year-old Gordon addressed his fellow Jews in 1863: "*HaKi-zah Ami*" (Awake my People). "This land of Eden now opens its gates to you," he claimed. Secular knowledge should be embraced and Russian (not Yiddish) spoken. Some might learn arts and crafts, the brave to enter army service, with farmers tending to plough and field. "Be a man abroad and a Jew in your tent," the poem concludes, "A brother to your countrymen and a servant to your kind." To greet the dawn of a new era, Russian Jewry, in Gordon's firm opinion, had to abandon its dependence on rigid leadership and, particularly, on the narrow confines of rabbinic doctrine.

The ostensibly "modern" Jews of Western Europe were hardly prepared to follow the new direction charted by these religious precursors of Zionism, let alone assume any leadership role in it. Alkalai and Kalischer wished them to head the movement to Zion, but they would not forsake the expectation that assimilation and Reform were about to bring their total acceptance as individuals by the majority society. The last remaining bars to full legal equality for the Jews of England, Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary were being lowered in the mid-19th century, and the successful careers of Rothschild, Crémieux, and the baptised Disraeli provided support for Western Jewry's liberal optimism. An appeal by Kalischer and Guttmacher in 1867, asking British Jewry for financial help to redeem what they called the "abandoned, devastated, sacred soil," therefore elicited few contributions.

In giving financial support to the earliest religious Zionist thinkers, Charles Netter of the Alliance Israélite and, especially, Sir Moses Montefiore proved to be notable exceptions. The latter even planned to ask the Sultan to grant a special autonomous status to the Jewish community in Palestine, to rebuild the economic wealth of the entire region by having banks there extend liberal credit, and introduce useful occupational

training for the country's Jewish youth. The Sublime Porte in Constantinople, however, moved slowly. Those Jews who first ventured outside of Jerusalem's ancient walls to the new housing development which Montefiore built in 1860 from the financial legacy of the American Jewish philanthropist, Judah Touro, realized full well that they were risking their lives. And, at times, Sir Moses plainly preferred the resettlement of Jewish refugees in countries other than Palestine.

Alkalai, Kalischer and the few kindred souls under discussion here did, however, contribute to the rise of Zionism in two important respects. First, their stress on Jewish colonization in Palestine from a religious-nationalist perspective would later make it considerably easier for the founders of the movement to draw on the masses of East European Jewry and their deeply-felt attachment to the traditional heritage. Settlement organizations of the 1880s, like BILU and Hovevei Zion, might draw inspiration from these pioneering writings and societies. One of Alkalai's few adherents (and also a Semlin resident) was the grandfather of Theodor Herzl, whose program remarkably resembled that of the obscure Belgrade mystic. The religious kibbutz, Tirat Zvi, in the Bet She'an Valley in Israel, would be named in Kalischer's honor a century later.

Second, their positive assertion of belief in the messianic prophecy and the historic destiny of the Jewish people made Zionism more than a response to modern anti-Semitism. That deeply religious conviction, as expressed by such men, linked the Zionist movement to the Jewish past. It also provided the perception, to be acted upon by many in the decades to follow, that the time for the ingathering of the exiles had arrived. Self-redemption, their sharpest break from standard Jewish attitudes — traditional and Reform alike — was essential to future Zionist thought.

Still, this coterie of shared views is correctly labeled "proto-Zionist." Individuals like Alkalai and Kalischer, for all their unique amalgam of tradition and modernism, shared Western Jewry's faith in its status as a liberated community. Emancipation was accepted as an instrument for solving the problems of Jewish secular status. With their major activities taking place during the heyday of mid-19th century liberalism, it is not surprising that Alkalai and Kalischer did not base their appeal for settlement in Palestine on the physical need of the Jewish people. They sought, rather, an essentially religious complement to Emancipation through the restoration of the Jews to Zion. Responding defensively to the pervasive ideological climate of their time, these traditional thinkers were innovative in viewing the Emancipation process as a means to further Orthodox self-preservation. They therefore gave rise to no movement of historical consequence. The same holds true for the primary secular proto-Zionist, Moses Hess. In the end, only the collapse of the ideological consensus based on Emancipation and Enlightenment made possible the birth of Zionism.

Zion — Neither Here Nor There?

MAURICE G. BOWLER

"They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward."
Jeremiah 50:5

IT IS AN ABUSE OF HISTORY TO LIFT STATEMENTS from one period to support an argument in an entirely different situation at a much later date. Moreover, if the argument is weak and the authority is weighty, then the temptation is strong. Anti-Zionism is just such a weak cause. It has been largely discredited since it became a front for anti-Semites in the aftermath of the Holocaust which made the anti-Semitic stand synonymous with the most depraved cruelty.

But there have been sincere and highly principled anti-Zionists in the past, and I know at least one at the present time. One such person in a former generation was Claude G. Montefiore (1858-1938) who was an articulate and cogent opponent of Zionism and who even crossed swords with Herzl himself about Zionism. It is tragic that one of Montefiore's essays, "Nation or Religious Community?" (1899) should be found within the covers of a book such as *Zionism Reconsidered* (1970)¹ alongside essays by Hannah Arendt, Isaac Deutscher, Morris R. Cohen and others, all of which are used by the editor, Michael Selzer, to deny the validity of the State of Israel. But Montefiore's standpoint was altogether removed from the carping and ignoble attitudes of many of Israel's contemporary critics. His position was not that of mere opposition to a Jewish state, but, rather, that of commitment to a universalistic global vision which he felt was threatened by the admittedly narrower vision of Jewish nationalism.

Zion Here

Claude Montefiore, co-founder with Lily Montagu of England, of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, was celebrated as a theologian, both in Jewish and Christian circles, but he was also deeply concerned about the *welfare* of his people, in every sense of the word "welfare." He particularly wanted to see his own ideal of "The Englishman of the Jewish persuasion" flourish amongst his fellow-Jews, especially those whose background, unlike his own, had provided little insight into the many glories which he saw in the concept of "*Civis Britannicus Sum*". Nowadays, ethnic identity is often seen as rather chic, at least in avant garde circles, but in Montefio-

1. C.G. Montefiore, *Zionism Reconsidered*, ed. M. Selzer (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 49-64.

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re's day any suggestion of "foreignness" came a poor second to identification with Imperial citizenship. England was the centre of Montefiore's world and, just as many of his Continental fellow-reformers could say "Germany is our Zion," so he could find in the values and ideals of his upbringing in Victorian England all the marks of a promised land, a "Zion" which he longed to commend to his fellow Anglo-Jews.

Through his presidency of the Anglo-Jewish Association and in various public statements, such as his 1917 letter to *The Times* in which he, together with Sir Leonard Cohen and others protested against the Balfour Declaration, he sought to oppose Zionism in order to protect the interests, as he saw them, of autochthonous Anglo-Judaism. His was a positive programme and it centered on a "new and purified Judaism" which was to drop any features incompatible with modern secular standards and to incorporate the best features of the surrounding culture and religion.

This seems an impractical and even unrealistic position in the light of current trends, but given Montefiore's background and insights, it was far from ignoble. With what seemed to be an overwhelmingly attractive prospect in view — of complete identification with the Gentile population in all matters except that of religious persuasion — Montefiore envisaged an ideal of "assimilation" in its positive sense of harmony and acceptance. By challenging this idea, Zionism seemed to introduce a jarring discord. In the nature of the case, there could not be two "Zions." If the prophet Jeremiah envisaged Jews "with their faces toward Zion," how could they face both inward and outward at the same time? How could Anglo-Jews build on the foundation of the 1858 Emancipation of the Jews of England if men were clamouring, in 1897, for a "Return to Zion"?

With generations of distinguished service in many fields now on the records of Anglo-Jewry, it is difficult to think back to Montefiore's day when he was surrounded by a majority of foreign-born, Yiddish-speaking co-religionists whose links with English culture were tenuous, indeed. Montefiore's programme was designed to meet this challenge. "Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion" were to be created from these newcomers, and strangeness of language and thought were to be sloughed off as the Anglo-Jewish gentleman emerged.

Zion There

Montefiore's "Zion Here" dream was to be shattered from more than one direction, not least from a change in the values and standards of English society in general. In his "testamentary" address to his friends of the London Society for the Study of Religion, he describes himself as "a disillusioned, sad and embittered old man"² — and the decline in

2. Lucy Cohen, *Some Recollections of Claude Goldsmid Montefiore* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940), p. 227.

standards, which a person of his refinement could not fail to notice, would be a major factor in this bitterness. The “Liberal” inspiration which had made England such an ideal location for his “new and purified Judaism” was already fading. A transformation was taking place — a process which is still going on. Whether or not it is to produce a better or a worse milieu than Montefiore’s England remains to be seen, but unmistakably it is a different society. The ideal of a new “Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land” was fast fading away and, instead, a distinctly Jewish identity, parallel to the English identity, but without any overtones of “dual loyalty,” was seen to be attainable without paying the unacceptable price of drastic assimilation. Together with this affirmation of Jewish identity and peoplehood as a feature of Anglo-Jewry, there emerged the associated idea of “Zion *There*” — a looking eastwards toward Jerusalem, as the early advocates of Zionism began to urge the “House of Jacob” to “rise up and go.” To Montefiore, for whom the ideal of “positive assimilation” still seemed a viable option, this “ultramontane,” “offshore” Palestinian orientation seemed a tragic undermining of the inestimable privilege of English identity and, from his own personal Liberal Jewish standpoint, a betrayal of the principle of universalism. Montefiore’s ideal Zion was not modelled on the united kingdom of David; for him that belonged to a former era when Israel was “a petty kingdom.” Like the Victorian poet, Tennyson, he looked for a wider brotherhood, “the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world,” where the universality of Judaism would swallow up what he called the “tribal” element of Jewish particularism.

Theodor Herzl himself recognized the great potential of Claude Montefiore if he could have been installed as Herzl’s “English lieutenant,” and Montefiore, likewise, was impressed by Herzl’s enthusiasm.³ There was no animus in Montefiore’s mind against the Jewish pioneers themselves nor against the basic principle of settlement by Jews of their ancient homeland. What he could not accept, however, was the pessimistic estimate of, and negative attitude towards, European Liberalism which underlay the Zionist position.

Montefiore even went to the length of blaming Weizmann and, by extension, Zionism, for helping to bring about the rise of Hitler and Nazism,⁴ which had already begun to ravage European Jewry in Montefiore’s closing years. He saw a precious treasure being lost; Herzl and Weizmann, however, did not really believe that this treasure — full and sincere acceptance of Jews on their own terms — had ever been available.

Montefiore’s opposition to Zionism, then, was not a product of Jewish self-hatred; it was not inspired by anti-Semitism, but, rather, by a fierce philo-Semitism which saw in Jewish nationalism a force which would estrange Anglo-Jewry from the surrounding Gentile society.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 253 — “Hitlerism is, at least partially, Weizmann’s creation.”

His searching analysis of the implications of Jewish statehood show a remarkable prescience. Thus, he discusses the validity of a “confessional” basis for what is really a political entity. What of the case of a “Christian Jew” who applied for citizenship? Montefiore raised this issue in his essay, “Liberal Judaism and Jewish Nationalism,” in 1917, long before the celebrated Brother Daniel case of 1962.⁵ Montefiore likewise was well aware of the potential dangers to Jewish communities in the Diaspora where the Gentile state had a credal or confessional basis. 13th century England or 15th century Spain were ominous pointers to what could happen. Montefiore took the trouble to think through the problems involved in the existence of a theocratic state in Palestine⁶, considering ramifications which not even all modern Israeli leaders have thought through.

He considered the implications for Jews of the dispersion if the nations where Jews were domiciled were themselves to adopt a theocratic model. Once again, the ramifications of such a *reciprocal* affirming of national religious identity have not been thought through in the Diaspora or in Israel. Perhaps this is mainly because the edge of both Israeli and English theocratic tendencies have been blunted by a prevailing climate of secularity. But the “Ayatollah” phenomenon in the Moslem sphere gives an ominous hint of what is never far from the surface in a fallen society, and Montefiore was right to consider the potential dangers facing the early Zionists. We are luckier, rather than wiser, than he if we can be more complacent than Montefiore was.

Here or There or Both?

Montefiore’s resistance to the Balfour Declaration could not prevent its being promulgated. His opposition to the emergence of a Jewish state could not frustrate its being proclaimed within ten years of his death. Jewish lives were rescued, Jewish dignity and self-respect were given enormous reinforcement and these were not considerations to be held lightly by such a dedicated worker for Jewish and universal betterment as, indeed, Claude Montefiore was. It is possible to disagree with his negative attitude towards Zionism. What is not possible, however, is to doubt the sincerity and nobility of purpose behind his attitude, arrived at, as it was, in a very different world and on the far side of the Holocaust.

Would it be too fanciful to suggest, in the light of post-Holocaust insight, that if Montefiore were alive today, pro-Zion emissaries from his own Progressive Jewish movement might have been able to win him over to their own pro-Zionist position, thus succeeding where the great Herzl himself had failed?

5. C.G. Montefiore, *Papers for Jewish People*, XVI (London: Jewish Religious Union, 1918), p. 14, and *Ibid.*, XX (1918), p. 7.

6. C.G. Montefiore, *Outlines of Liberal Judaism* (London: Macmillan, 1923), p. 305 ff.; cf. Montefiore, *Liberal Judaism & Hellenism* (London: Macmillan, 1918), p. 318.

שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה

1

הַחֲמָה מֵרֹאשׁ הָאֵילָנוֹת נִסְתַּלְקָה –
בָּאוּ וְנִצָּא לְקִרְאָת שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה.
הִנֵּה הִיא יוֹרֶדֶת הַקְדוּשָׁה, הַבְּרוּכָה
וְעַמָּה מַלְאָכִים צָבָא שְׁלוֹם וּמְנוּחָה.
בָּאִי, בָּאִי, הַמַּלְכָּה!
בָּאִי, בָּאִי, הַמַּלְכָּה! –
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מַלְאָכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם!

2

קִבְּלֵנוּ פָּנֵי שַׁבַּת בְּרִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה,
הַבִּיטָה נְשׁוּבָה, בְּלֵב מָלֵא גִילָה.
שֵׁם עֲרוּךְ הַשְּׁלֶחֶן, הַנְּרוֹת יְאִירוּ,
כָּל־פְּנוֹת הַבֵּית יִזְרְחוּ, יִזְהִירוּ.
שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹם וּמִבְרָךְ!
שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹם וּמִבְרָךְ!
בְּאַכֶם לְשְׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם!

3

שְׁבִי, זָכָה, עִמָּנוּ וּבְזִינוּךְ נָא אוֹרִי
לֵילָה יוֹם, אַחֵר תַּעֲבִירִי.
וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִכְבְּדֶךָ בְּבִגְדֵי חֲמוּדוֹת,
בְּזִמְרֵנוֹת וּתְפִלוֹת וּבְשֵׁלֶשׁ סְעֻדוֹת.
וּבְמְנוּחָה שְׁלָמָה,
וּבְמְנוּחָה נְעִמָה –
בְּרִכּוֹנוּ לְשְׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם!

4

הַחֲמָה מֵרֹאשׁ הָאֵילָנוֹת נִסְתַּלְקָה –
בָּאוּ וְנִלְוֶה אֶת־שַׁבַּת הַמַּלְכָּה.
צֵאתְךָ לְשְׁלוֹם, הַקְדוּשָׁה, הַזָּכָה –
דְּעִי, שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים אֵל שׁוֹבֵךְ נִחְפָּה...
כֵּן לְשַׁבַּת הַבָּאָה!
כֵּן לְשַׁבַּת הַבָּאָה!
צֵאתְכֶם לְשְׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם!

ח. נ. ביאליק

Shabbat haMalkah

ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER

BIALIK'S "SHABBAT HAMALKAH" ("SHABBAT THE Queen," 1903) is a poem which seems deceptively simple. The beautiful melody to which it has been set and the liturgical uses to which it is put in synagogues and other settings have helped to make it a folk song which is not studied by the scholarly world. The result is that a poem which embodies many elements important to an understanding of Bialik has been excluded from serious consideration.

The work first appeared in *HaZamir* (*The Nightingale*), a collection of children's songs and poems published in 1903, and does appear appropriate to that volume.¹ It does not seem to be particularly profound, and therein lies its charm, for, beneath the innocent facade, the regular rhyme and meter and Pinhas Minkowski's haunting melody, there is a statement which encapsulates Bialik's attitude toward Jewish tradition.

Bialik's approach to Judaism emphasizes the importance of renewal, not revolution. While he broke with traditional Jewish observance when, as an adolescent, he left the Yeshivah of Volozhin, he did not reject Judaism out of hand.² In fact, in his essays and speeches, as well as in his poetry, he repeatedly affirms the centrality of Jewish observance and practice and its importance for the future. This poem, in both its theme and its use of language, exemplifies his interest in reviving a form of Jewish traditionalism.

Shabbat looms large in Bialik's view of Judaism and Jewish values. At the cornerstone laying of Ohel Shem in Tel Aviv, he said that the founders of Oneg Shabbat who wanted to create independent and innovative forms of Jewish life in Israel had done well to take as the foundation of their endeavor Shabbat, which had been observed by Jews even before the giving of the Torah.³ The Shabbat that Bialik describes is one which is the "marvelous creation" of the Jewish people — "a holy and supreme day

1. [Yeruham] F[ishell] Lachower, *H. N. Bialik, Hayyav viYzirotav* [H. N. Bialik, His Life and Works], 3 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1943-1947), vol. 2, p. 529.

2. He reports later that he considered resuming a full range of observance (H. N. Bialik, *Devarim shebe'Al Peh* [Speeches and Addresses], 2 vols. [Tel Aviv, 1935], vol. 2, p. 210 in an address entitled "On Aḥad Ha'Am" [Hebrew], 23 Tevet 5693).

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161, in an address entitled "About Ohel Shem and Oneg Shabbat" [Hebrew], Iyyar 5688. See also Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York, 1966), p. 19.

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'Shabbat the queen,'"⁴ It is the result of a joint effort of Halakhah (Jewish law) and Aggadah (Jewish lore). The description of it in the poem is highly selective, emphasizing elements which are folk in nature while omitting those which are prescribed by Jewish law.

The omissions are, indeed, glaring. Both in the Creation story (Gen. 2:3) and in the first version of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:11), Shabbat is presented as a divinely ordained day, set aside in memory of God's having both worked for six days and having rested on the seventh. In the poem, God and creation are both missing. The second version of the Ten Commandments presents Shabbat as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt and God's redemptive power (Deut. 5:12-15). This aspect of Shabbat is also missing from the poem. Nor are these two themes merely biblical. They recur, for example, in the kiddush for Friday night. Bialik ignores the divinely ordained nature of Shabbat and its role as a reminder of two of God's most important areas of activity: creation in the natural world and redemption in Jewish history. Thus, in describing the Shabbat, he stresses only those elements most important to him — the folk elements — and omits the classic religious ones.

The language, too, is worthy of note. While the poem was originally written as an educational children's song, it became ensconced among Bialik's "Poems and Verses: quasi-folk poems." In writing folk literature, Bialik was aware of the paradox of writing folk songs in a language which was not spoken.⁵ In part to circumvent this absence of a spoken language and in part to preserve folk elements for the future, he deliberately uses familiar phrases in his poetry.⁶ He states that

every period has introduced many poems and verses which have survived among the people. Shabbat songs, piyyutim, prayers and supplications, although they are religious poems, have always been sung by the people at all times.⁷

These popular elements are thus woven into a new and supple folk idiom which replaces the colloquial idiom that Hebrew could not yet offer.⁸

The structure of the poem is fairly simple. Each of the four stanzas consists of three rhymed couplets and a concluding line which functions as a refrain. The first two couplets and the final line of each stanza are

4. H. N. Bialik, "Halakhah and Aggadah" [Hebrew], *Kol Kitvei H. N. Bialik* [Complete Works of H. N. Bialik] (Tel Aviv, 1938), p. 208.

5. "I am particularly fond of the folk genre. There is a special piquancy in the fact that the Hebrew language has no experience with it: Folk poems in a language which is not spoken" [Translation mine] (H. N. Bialik, *Iggerot* [Letters], 5 vols. [Tel Aviv, 1938-1939], vol. 2, p. 109), in an undated letter to A. Druyanow, assumed to have been written in August, 1910.

6. See Bialik's discussion of how great authors like Shakespeare, Boccaccio and Shalom Aleichem retain folk elements in their work (H. N. Bialik, *Devarim*, vol. 2, p. 127, in an address entitled "On Folktales" [Hebrew], 15 Iyyar 5694).

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187 in an address entitled "In Honor of Tchernichowsky and Shneour," 1yyar 5685.

8. Jacob Fichmann, *Shirat Bialik* [Bialik's Poetry] (Jerusalem, 1946), p. 77.

written in amphibrachic tetrameter; the fifth and sixth lines, in amphibrachic trimeter.⁹ This seven-line form mirrors, in microcosm, the structure of the Jewish week, which must, perforce, focus on Shabbat. The fifth and sixth lines are short, reflecting the pressured, hurried pace of Shabbat preparations. The final line of each stanza, drawn with occasional minor modification from the well-known Shabbat hymn "*Shalom Aleikhem*" ("Peace Unto You"), returns the reader to the full-length line and to the comfort of the familiar. Thus, even in its structure, the poem makes its central statement: Shabbat is essential.

The poem is entitled "*Shabbat haMalkah*." This title is not, however, the original one, for in Pines' *HaZamir* it was "*Zemer leShabbat*" ("A Song for Shabbat"). The current title is drawn from a talmudic statement by Rabbi Hanina which appears in the first stanza. It conjures up a regal Shabbat and, at the same time, alludes to the Shabbat hymn, "*Lekhah Dodi*" ("Come, My Beloved") with its reference to Shabbat as a *kallah* (bride). The regal aspects of this Shabbat are essentially the entourage with which it arrives and ceremonially departs.

The poem opens at twilight — a moment hanging in time. The sun has just disappeared from the tree tops.¹⁰ This line, which recurs again at the opening of the fourth stanza, is the only reference to nature¹¹ and serves as the passageway through which one leaves the world at large and enters Jewish time. This contrasts with the traditional view of Shabbat as a "reminder of the work of Creation." Once the time is set, the message is given, not in the words of the narrator, but in the words of Rabbi Hanina, who used to robe himself on the eve of Shabbat and say: "*Bo'u ve'nei'zei likrat Shabbat hamalkah* (Come, let us go, out to greet Shabbat the Queen)."¹² This custom was revived in extended form in the late sixteenth century by the Kabbalists of Safed¹³ who went out to greet the Shabbat queen, who brought with her angels constituting an army of peace and rest.

The descriptions of the Shabbat as *kedoshah* (holy) and *berukkah*

9. Benshalom indicated that this is one of a number of poems in which Bialik intermingles amphibrachic trimeter and tetrameter (Benzion Benshalom, "Bialik's Meters" [Hebrew] in Gershon Shaked, *Bialik: Yezirato leSugeha beR'i haBikkoret* [Bialik: His Work by Genre in the Light of Criticism] [Jerusalem, 1974], pp. 59-60).

10. The words *hammah* (sun) and *nistalkah* (disappeared) appear together in a discussion of the definition of twilight in Rav Nissim Ga'on's commentary on B. Ber. 3b: "And Rabbi Yehudah thought that from the time of the setting of the sun [*hammah*] until its glow disappears [*yistallek*] from upon the earth and its afterglow turns silver [and disappears] from the sky, that is twilight." (Translation mine.)

11. This is striking because, as Simon Ginzburg indicates, references to nature are common in Bialik's poetry for children (Simon Ginzburg, *BeMassekhet haSifrut* [In the Web of Literature] [New York, 1945], pp. 88-90).

12. B. *Shabbat* 119a. (Translation mine.)

13. Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* [Jewish Worship in its Historical Development], 4th ed. (Hildesheim, 1962), p. 108.

(blessed) are examples of the limited use of standard religious vocabulary in the poem.¹⁴ Upon first reading, these words elicit no attention, as they seem entirely appropriate to a Shabbat poem, but further reflection leads to the conclusion that the sanctification and blessing to which Bialik alludes are not the traditional ones of the Shabbat kiddush but refer, rather, in a general way, to the people's setting Shabbat aside as a special day. This usage of religious terminology, then, constitutes nothing more than the incorporation of familiar traditional vocabulary. The fifth and sixth lines, *Bo'i, bo'i hamalkah* (Come, come, O Queen) refer once more to "*Lekhah Dodi*" for they echo its conclusion, *Bo'i khallah, bo'i khallah* (Come, O bride, come, O bride). These lines enhance the tightness of the structure by repeating the rhyme of the first couplet. The stanza concludes with the first line of the hymn "*Shalom Aleikhem*." Here the line is modified by the substitution of *shalom* (peace) for *sharet* (service). This serves to make all the refrains more uniform and to emphasize, once more, the importance of peace and its association with Shabbat.

The return home from synagogue after the Shabbat evening service is the focus of the second stanza. Like the focus of the first one, it is a moment in time, if somewhat more extended. This moment is determined, however, not by nature but by Jewish time. The religious services are alluded to most sketchily: the verb *kibbalnu* (we have greeted) alludes to *kabbalat Shabbat* (welcoming the Shabbat), the psalms and song which open the Friday evening service; the word *tefillah* (prayer) follows directly upon *renanah* (song) as if to indicate that prayer and song are equivalent.¹⁵ The core of the stanza is based on a well-known talmudic legend:

It was taught, R. Jose son of R. Judah said: Two ministering angels accompany man on the eve of the Sabbath from the synagogue to his home, one a good angel and one an evil angel. And when he arrives home and finds the lamp burning, the table laid and the couch [bed] covered with a spread, the good angel exclaims, "May it be even thus on another Sabbath too," and the evil angel unwillingly responds "amen." But, if not, the evil angel exclaims, "May it be even thus on another Sabbath [too]," and the good angel unwillingly responds, "amen."¹⁶

Indeed, the set table and burning candles in the poem come directly from

14. These two words appear in a verse in Genesis (2:3) which is part of the kiddush: "And God blessed [vayevarekh] the seventh day and he hallowed [vayekaddesh] it."

15. *Renanah* (song) is probably chosen because it appears in the last stanza of the Shabbat hymn "*Zur mishelo*" ("The Rock From Whom. . .") sung on Friday night: "And there we will sing a new song and with joyous singing (*renanah*) we will go up." Avital points to a possible source for the phrase in Jer. 7:16: "Neither lift up cry (*rinah*) nor prayer (*tefillah*) for them" (A. Avital, *Shirat Bialik v'haTanakh* [Bialik's Poetry and the Bible] [Tel Aviv, 1952], p. 228). If there is any connection to Jeremiah it is weakened by the fact that the words and context are both different. Professor Raymond Scheindlin informs me that *rinah* is used as an equivalent to *tefillah* in medieval Hebrew literature.

16. B. *Shabbat* 119b. Soncino translation.

this legend. The couch, while not specifically mentioned, is clearly included among the shining corners of the house. The shining light, indicated by three verbs, *ya'iru* (they will illumine, literally, cause light), *yizrahu* (they will shine), *yazhiru* (they will glow, literally, cause to burn brightly), the first and third of which are in the causative *hif'il* form, is the most striking quality of this evening scene.¹⁷ The brilliant cleanliness which pervades the house is an indication of the importance of esthetics on Shabbat, something Bialik emphasizes in other places.¹⁸ The short couplet in the fifth and sixth lines repeats the greeting *Shabbat shalom u'mevorakh* (a peaceful and blessed Shabbat) and, in quasi-dialogue form, seems to dramatize this homecoming scene. The concluding line of the stanza is drawn precisely from "*Shalom Aleikhem*."

This vignette of the return from synagogue on Shabbat eve is significant not merely in its use of traditional language and legend, but also in its careful omissions. The prayers in the synagogue have been concluded when the stanza opens, and they are alluded to only in passing. The candles in the home are shining, but if they are Shabbat candles, rather than ordinary illuminating ones, there is no mention of their having been blessed. The other home rituals of Friday night — the recitation of "*Ayshet hayyil*" (Woman of Valor), kiddush over wine, two hallot for hamozi — are not mentioned. While one may argue that the moment described is after candlelighting and synagogue services but before the other parts of the home service, the choice of the moment is clearly Bialik's.

The third stanza differs from the others. First, unlike them, it does not open at a precise moment. From its contents, it seems to take place on Shabbat day, possibly in the afternoon. Second, it alone opens by addressing Shabbat. Third, the meter is irregular. Fourth, only in the third stanza are the fifth and sixth lines not identical. Furthermore, like the first stanza, but unlike the second and fourth, it modifies slightly the final line quoted from "*Shalom Aleikhem*." These changes in the previously determined pattern are a device that Bialik uses to focus the reader's attention on these lines.

In this stanza the narrator asks something of the Shabbat. He implores it to stay. The request is somewhat puzzling because Shabbat always lasts for precisely the length of time that Bialik specifically asks for — "a night and a day." Thus, while it is made in a matter-of-fact tone, the request is also completely superfluous. The significance of it is apparent,

17. The two *hif'il* verbs appear together in the talmudic version of the prayer recited by rabbis departing the school of R. Avnir, "may your eyes be enlightened (*ya'iru*) by the light of the Torah and your face shine (*yazhiru*) like the brightness of the firmament" (B. Ber. 17a. Soncino translation).

18. In his speech at the cornerstone-laying of Ohel Shem, Bialik refers to Shammai who saved his most beautiful things for Shabbat and suggests looking to Shabbat for the development of an esthetic style (H. N. Bialik, *Devarim* 2:161, in "On 'Ohel Shem' and 'Oneg Shabbat'").

however, when one discovers the source of the phrase *aḥar ta'avori* (afterwards you will pass on). The words are the very ones with which Abraham urges the messengers/angels to stay with him (Gen. 18:5).¹⁹ In the biblical story the angels or messengers apparently intend merely to stop, to acknowledge Abraham, and then to continue on their way to Sodom. Abraham succeeds in convincing them to stay much longer than they had intended, and the narrator, it seems, would also like to convince Shabbat to stay beyond the appointed time, though he does not say so directly.

There are two instances of Bialik's incorporation of well-known vocabulary in the first couplet. The first is the use of the word *ziv*, which appears in the description of the heavenly lights to be found in the Shaḥar-rit service for Shabbat: *meleyim ziv umefikim nogah* (full of brilliance and pouring forth splendor). The second is the allusion to hospitality that is found in the Abraham story. The commandment to be hospitable which derives from this story is often fulfilled on Shabbat. Both the use of traditional language and the reference, somewhat oblique, to the way in which Shabbat is celebrated emphasize the folk quality of the day.

As an inducement for Shabbat to remain, the narrator mentions that it will be honored in different ways: the esthetic — fine clothing, the musical — songs and prayers, the gustatory — three meals, and, above all, by rest. Each of these merits comment. The phrase used to describe the clothing — *bigdei ḥamudot* (fine clothing) — is the phrase used to describe Rebecca's choice when she provided Jacob with Esau's clothing (Gen. 27:15). Yet this does not seem to have any significance beyond the use of a well-known phrase, for we know that the custom of honoring Shabbat with special clothing goes back at least to the talmudic period.²⁰ The reference to prayers is the second in the poem. Once again, they are mentioned after songs. In this case, however, it is not even clear which service, if any, is alluded to, and it may be merely a vague reference to the Shabbat atmosphere. Eating three meals on Shabbat is a custom which also goes back to the talmudic period but was particularly emphasized by Kabbalists and Hasidim.²¹ Thus, the stanza contains a wide range of allusions to the way in which Shabbat has come to be celebrated.

A primary distinguishing characteristic of Shabbat is rest. It is not merely mentioned in words, but is exemplified in the very structure of the stanza, which is slower than the others, an effect achieved by deviating from the strong metrical pattern that the poet has previously established.

19. The poem as it appeared in *HaZamir* (1903, 1905 and 1910 editions) differed from the standard edition only in the title and in this line. The line originally read: *Laylah vayom aḥareikhen ta'avori* which, like the current line, means "a night and a day, afterwards you will pass on." One reason for the change must have been to supply the reference to Genesis.

20. B. *Shabbat* 113a; Mordecai Genn, "The Influence of Rabbinic Literature on the Poetry of Haym Nahman Bialik" (unpubl. diss., Brandeis, 1978).

21. B. *Shabbat* 117b. J. D. Eisenstein, *Ozar Dinim uMinhagim* [A Digest of Jewish Laws and Customs] (New York, 1938), p. 419.

The meter is much more irregular than in the other stanzas where the only metrical variations are the occasional omission of a syllable at the beginning of a line. Here two unaccented syllables are omitted at the caesura in the second line and an accented syllable is omitted in the fifth and sixth lines.²² These lines, which, in the other stanzas, embody the rushed atmosphere of Shabbat preparations, are transformed by the changed wording, into a leisurely picture of Shabbat,²³ which is, of course, appropriate to the lines devoted to a description of Shabbat rest. Shabbat involves a change of pace, and, in the narrator's necessarily futile attempt to prolong it, the pace of the stanza is changed.

Yet another significant change is in the last line of the stanza. While it is also the opening of the third stanza of "*Shalom Aleikhem*," the object of the angels' blessing is changed from first person singular to first person plural. This change is not trivial; it shows the pains that Bialik took to portray Shabbat as the product of the folk, rather than of an individual. In fact, having all the first person pronouns in the poem plural reinforces the collective nature of the creation of Shabbat.

Just as the poem opens at a moment defined by nature, so does it close at the same moment the next day. The first line of the last stanza is identical with the first line of the first, and the moment after sunset provides a balanced opening and closing. Again, sunset is the portal between Jewish time and natural time. Only one change distinguishes the second lines of these stanzas: the word *nelaveh* (let us accompany) alludes to the *melaveh malkah*, a festive celebration which accompanies the Shabbat on its way, while effectively retarding its departure.²⁴ This celebration, observed with particular fervor by Hasidim, is another example of a widespread Shabbat custom.

The acknowledgement that, indeed, Shabbat must depart is tempered by the admission that the next six days will be spent waiting for its return. Lest the reader assume that the narrator has come to terms with that prospect, Bialik subtly informs us that this situation is far from ideal. This is accomplished by the use of the slant rhyme: *ah/eh*, as though the poet were saying that the flaw in this world is that we must wait six days from Shabbat to Shabbat. This may reflect the hope expressed in a Shab-

22. The following is my preferred scansion of line 16:

Laylah / vāyom || āhār / tā'avōrī. One might also read it:

Laylah / vāyom || āhar tā' / avorī.

The second reading supplies one of the missing syllables but seems less likely because the *ḥataf-pataḥ* would normally be elided with the preceding *pataḥ*. The fifth and sixth lines would be scanned:

Uvīnenu | ḥāh shēlemāh / uvīmenuḥ āh | nā'emah.

23. The phrase *menuḥah na'emah* (pleasant rest) in the sixth line comes from Jacob's blessing to Issachar in Gen. 49:15.

24. It is interesting that the *melaveh malkah* has been attributed to R. Hanina who insisted that the table be properly set for the fourth meal of the Shabbat (B. *Shabbat* 119b); Eisenstein, *Ozar*, p. 222.

bat addition to the Grace after Meals which asks for a “day [time] that is eternal Shabbat.”

The final stanza brings us full circle — not only in time, but in content as well, for it brings us back to the legend of the two angels, with its theme: “Thus may it be on another Shabbat.” That thought, differently worded, and repeated as the fifth and sixth lines, is the most important theme in the poem, as it emphasizes the security of knowing that the apparently interminable wait, signified by the suspension points, will inevitably be rewarded by another Shabbat.

Thus Bialik has, in the course of the poem, presented a traditional, perhaps even a nostalgic, picture of Shabbat. He has often cast his description in terms which are drawn from traditional sources, while the elements which he presents are also part of the standard Shabbat observance. Nothing has been changed.

It is, nonetheless, important to note what has been omitted from the picture. God is entirely absent. There is no description of any religious service. The two fleeting references to prayer both follow a reference to music. The public reading of the Torah, central to the day, is nowhere to be found. Even the home rituals are omitted. This consistent pattern of overlooking the religious, while emphasizing the folk element, is what distinguishes the poem. It is not, despite its ready acceptance into the synagogue service, a religious poem; it is an areligious, national poem.

Bialik's stress on Shabbat from a nonreligious point of view is borne out in his essays and speeches as well. He was not alone in this opinion, which was, in fact, carefully articulated by his mentor, Aḥad Ha'Am.

Anyone who feels in his heart a true tie with national life throughout the generations, will not — even if he does not acknowledge either the world-to-come or the Jewish state — be able in any way to imagine Jewish existence without “The Shabbat Queen.”²⁵

While it is not clear that Bialik himself chose the section of *HaZamir* in which this poem would be printed, it was placed in the section entitled “Nationalist Poems.” There is no doubt that he would have agreed.

25. Aḥad Ha'Am, “A Small Collection” [Hebrew], #30, *HaShilo'ah*, 3:560. (Translation mine.)

Shlomo Dov Goitein — Scholar Extraordinary

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN

"THE EIGHTH DECADE OF MY LIFE WAS ITS most productive time. It was harvesttime time for my work on the Cairo Geniza." These are the words of one of the most extraordinary scholars of our age, Professor Shlomo Dov Goitein of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and I quoted them to him when I interviewed him shortly after his 83rd birthday on April 3, 1983. He nodded approval and said that he is still harvesting the fruit of his pioneer work, of more than thirty-five years, deciphering many thousands of Cairo Geniza texts and using them as the building blocks for his monumental, five-volume *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Cairo Geniza* (published by the University of California Press).

In the three years since I had last visited Goitein in Jerusalem, he has continued to live by Ecclesiastes' rule, "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not let rest your hands." In addition to "harvesting" more fruit of his Geniza research in Volume 4 of *A Mediterranean Society*, published in the Fall of 1983, and finishing Volume 5, scheduled for publication in 1985, Goitein has added numerous new items to his bibliography which now numbers about 600 listings. He pointed to three stacks of pamphlets on a shelf near his desk and said, "These reprints arrived just a few days ago." He gave me one of each: "Jerusalem in the Arab Period (638–1099)" printed in *The Jerusalem Cathedra* of 1982, "Prayers from the Geniza for Fatimid Caliphs, the Head of the Jerusalem Yeshiva, the Jewish Community and the Local Congregation," which appeared in the *Leon Nemoy Festschrift* (1982) and a Hebrew essay on Moses Maimonides' *mehulan*, Rabbi Hananel Hadayan, whose daughter was married to the Rambam's only son, Abraham. His important history of *Palestinian Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times in the Light of the Geniza Documents* (written in Hebrew) is another substantial contribution of Goitein's eighth and, now, his ninth decade.

He was, as always, eloquent in speaking about the Geniza material and a bit impatient when I inquired about the numerous honors and awards of the past three years. In 1980, he received the Harvey Prize (\$35,000 — "a very large sum in Israel") awarded annually by the Haifa Technion to a scholar in the humanities. More recently, in January 1982, he was honored with a life-time award of \$60,000 annually, tax-free, by the MacArthur Fund of Chicago, which searches for geniuses and creative people in scholarship, literature and the arts.

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These awards came as a real surprise, (Goitein said). I didn't expect anything of this sort but, of course, I am pleased because I now am able to donate the pension I receive from the Hebrew University (\$5,000 a year) for a fellowship for a deserving student.

Among the numerous literary tributes to Goitein on his 80th birthday, *Studies in Judaism and Islam*, edited by Shlomo Morag, Issachar ben-Ami and Norman A. Stillman (The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University) provides the most succinct brief statement of Goitein's role as a seminal Jewish scholar.

Goitein, (Professor Joshua Prawer writes) has rescued from oblivion a great chapter in the history of the Near East. His own nation, however, owes him the construction from foundations to roof, of a magnificent structure of Jewish communities which lived in the shadow of the Crescent for almost three hundred years, in the far-flung areas from Gibraltar across North Africa to the confines of India.

What were no more than names, geographical or personal, suspended in a kind of ethereal void, became under his vigorous pen a robust living world, tangible, busy, bustling, filled with the noises and scents of Near Eastern bazaars, but also resounding with the voices of children in schools, of the grown-ups in synagogues and the solemnity of the Elders laying down the law in court and Academy seven hundred years ago. Merchants, craftsmen, bankers, teachers, families which could trace their origins over several generations in a great community center, dispersed over the vast spaces of Islam, city quarters, streets, houses, and shops were resurrected from the dust of bits and pieces of paper and parchment of the Genizah.

To this herculean task S. D. Goitein brought an unequalled mastery of two great cultures, Judaism and Islam, from their respective biblical and koranic origins to our own times. Their intrinsic values, mutual relations, spiritual creativity and confrontation remained a permanent source of inspiration. Only a philologist, at home in the languages and in the devious dialects of the Near East, among them Judeo-Arabic, the diligence and the involvement of the eternally curious student and the acumen of a great scholar made it possible to accomplish this task.

There is, however, another dimension to S. D. Goitein's scholarship, a feature of the man and of his work, and that is the warm sympathy with which he treats his subjects. Like all great writers and some historians, he is very much in love with the society he created. Hence the humane dimension of his writing.

Sixty years of study and teaching in three continents, but foremost in Israel, left their imprint on a whole generation of medievalists, historians of Jews and Judaism, philologists of Arabic language and literature, students of Islam, sociologists, folklorists, historians of etatic structures and of economy and society. Their number is legion and they represent the multifaceted perspectives of medieval societies around our common life-bearing lake, the Mediterranean.

A "herculean task" and a monumental achievement, Goitein's *A Mediterranean Society* opens up an entirely new field of Jewish scholarship, replete with novel and fascinating insights on how Jewish communities of the Mediterranean region, and the women and men who were part of them, lived during the High Middle Ages (950–1250).

The theme of Volume I of *A Mediterranean Society*, a massive book of 568 pages, is “Economic Foundations.” It describes the many trades and industries in which the “Geniza people” earned their living, whether in their respective communities or by “travel and seafaring,” which was mainly for business but also for pleasure. A master teacher, Goitein writes his books not only for scholars. His style is simple and precise, and he knows how to hold the attention of the reader. There is none of the jargon of scholarship which turns off general intelligent readers, but, at the same time, the appendices and notes (200 pages of Volume I) provide all the documentation that specialists expect. Each and every statement in the text of the book is documented.

Volume II, “The Community” (633 pages), and Volume III, “The Family” (534 pages), have the same pattern. Volume IV, “Daily Life” (600 pages), is devoted to the “Material Culture” of the Mediterranean world of the High Middle Ages — architecture, furnishings, utensils. Thus, Dr. Goitein said, “We know, to give an example, how the house of a doctor looked like in the year 1050 or in 1150.” Volume V, which is ready, is titled “The Individual” and is subtitled, “Portrait of the Geniza Person.” As this volume will also contain a cumulative index to the five volumes, a list of Arabic and Hebrew terms and what Professor Goitein refers to as “an enormous list of Geniza texts,” he has kept the text proper to the very minimum — about 600 typed pages. When I suggested publishing the cumulative index and the “enormous lists” in a separate volume, which would be the sixth, Professor Goitein said that this is impossible. “In the Preface to Volume III, I referred to Volume IV as ‘the concluding volume of this book.’ So I have already sinned with Volume V — and this has to be the final volume of *A Mediterranean Society*.”

Thanks to Goitein’s meticulous scholarship we know virtually all that can possibly be known about these Mediterranean Jewish communities. He opened up the documentary material of the Cairo Geniza of about 200,000 manuscript leaves, (as distinguished from the literary material) not counting the Geniza material in the so-called Second Firkovitch Collection in the State Public Library of Leningrad, where he did research in 1965. While tens of thousands of these are “mere scraps of paper,” there are still, in Goitein’s guarded estimate, “about 10,000 items of some length, of which about 7,000 are self-contained units large enough to be regarded as documents of historical value.” Unfortunately, “only about half of these are preserved more or less completely.”

The literary Geniza material is especially rich in Responsa — “answers” of Rabbinic authorities on questions of religious, legal or general character. Of mixed documentary and literary character are the scrolls (*Megillot*) which, Professor Goitein explains, “like the biblical scrolls of Ruth or Esther, describe fateful events or periods in the life of a person, a family, or a community.”

A precise philologist, Professor Goitein points out that while the

Hebrew noun, *geniza*, is usually rendered “archive” (in keeping with its biblical usage), in medieval Hebrew, *geniza*, or rather, *beth geniza*, designates a repository of discarded writings containing a mention of God. Such writings (today it would be printed books, pamphlets and the like, with the Hebrew designation of God), were stored in a *geniza* and, eventually, buried. Using *geniza* material — especially of such a gigantic size as the Cairo Geniza — is difficult because, Goitein explains, a *geniza* “is the very opposite of an archive” where “one keeps documents in order to use them, if and when necessary. Therefore, much care is taken to preserve them well” and also in proper order. Not so with a *geniza*, which is a catch-all receptacle for “papers which had lost all value to their possessors.” Thus, “in the *geniza* everything is topsy turvy.” Another characteristic of the Geniza is “its erratic character,” Goitein writes in the Introduction to Volume I of *A Mediterranean Society*. “Alongside carefully worded and magnificently executed deeds, one finds hastily written notes, accounts or letters, jotted down in nearly illegible script and in sloppy or faulty language.” However, as he sees it, these

very shortcomings of the Geniza, constitute its uniqueness and glory. It is a true mirror of life, often cracked and blotchy, but very wide in scope and reflecting each and every aspect of the society that originated it.

Making order and sense of the Cairo Geniza was complicated by the circumstance that, while most of the Geniza manuscripts are in the Taylor-Schechter Collection of England’s Cambridge University Library, other libraries, such as the Bodleian, Oxford, the British Museum, the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, and the State Public Library in Leningrad also possess representative collections of Geniza material. Smaller collections are in another fifteen medium-size and small libraries and museums the world over.

As a result, Goitein faced the quandary that “pages of one and the same book, nay fragments of one and the same document” were found in such distant places as Leningrad, Cambridge and New York. Moreover, material was not filed and catalogued. He had to examine “tens of thousands of Geniza documents mostly in Hebrew language written in Arab characters — the majority barely legible, with the ink faded. “As the Taylor-Schechter Collection, because of its size and the quality of some of the manuscripts that were identified, promised the richest harvest, Goitein spent eighteen seasons of concentrated work in Cambridge, sorting out “many tens of thousands of unclassified Geniza papers,” so as to select the documentary material. Thanks to his gargantuan efforts, all of the material “is now conveniently accessible in separate boxes,” as arranged by him.

Goitein’s involvement with Geniza research started in 1948, when he was sent on a special mission to Budapest, Hungary. “It was believed,” he wrote, “that the famous David Kaufmann collection of Geniza papers had

been lost during the war.” However, a few items had been found and he was asked to publish them. “This I did,” he recalls, “and thus I entered a field of research which previously I had studiously avoided.” One of the reasons was that, living in a secular age, he wondered whether a modern secular-oriented person could *really* understand the mindset of the people of the medieval ages of belief.

His “trepidation” and reluctance gave way as he remembered his childhood and youth in the little Bavarian town of Burgkunststadt where his father, Dr. Edward E. Goitein, was the Rabbi, and where loyalty to Jewish belief and practice was, he recalls, “the one real issue in life overriding all others.” He remembers himself as “a thoroughly medieval man,” who knows what “sin and expiation mean.” In those years, young Goitein “experienced exultation and vigilance in prayer, purification and fasting, and constant reward in pursuit of religious study as worship.”

Unlike the secular-culture-negating ultra-Orthodox Jews of Eastern Europe, Orthodox Jews in Germany lived in Samson Raphael Hirsch’s formula of fusing secular culture with the dedicated study of Torah and the punctilious observance of all the minutiae of Jewish Law.

Goitein recalls that “we lived comfortably at the same time in the two opposing worlds of Faith and Reason. Faith was simply there; it was, so to say, natural to us.” However, for him, this has changed over the years. Analogous to the tremendous technical changes that he witnessed — “my life extended from stagecoach to jet plane and space flight” — the simplistic belief of his youth has given way to a sophisticated modern *Weltanschauung*. However, Professor Goitein emphasizes that he remains a *homo religiosus*. When, during my recent visit at the Goitein home, we had our afternoon tea, he covered his head with a skullcap.

As a student in Frankfurt, studying Talmud every morning at 6:30 and, four times a week during the late afternoon, in addition to twenty-four to thirty hours a week at the university, created no psychological difficulties for young Goitein. He attended gymnasium (high school), at Bamberg and, as a boy, he had a very good soprano voice, so he sang in his school choir which was also the choir of the Bamberg Cathedral.

I have found (Professor Goitein said) that Jews who are secure as Jews are not discomfited when their Christian neighbors observe Christmas. In my Bamberg school I was the only Jew among 600 Catholics. They knew that I observed my religion and I knew that they observed theirs. They respected me and I respected them. I suppose, (he added) I acquired this attitude in my parents’ home where the word *goy* was not permitted to be applied to a non-Jew. Referring perhaps to the biblical appellation of the Israelites as *goy kadosh* (a sanctified people), my father would reprimand those who used *goy* in a derogatory manner with “*you yourself are a goy.*”

For Goitein, the greatest educational influence was the parental home. He was only fourteen when his father died, but, he wrote, “by that time I had already received all or most a man needs for his moral forma-

tion.” There was love and kindness in the Goitein home, “and the moral standards and religious postulates were absolute.” The three Goitein boys knew this. Although boys will be boys, “a short, usually very short, reference to those standards and postulates was sufficient to keep us in line.” Reprimands and punishment were not necessary because “we knew what was expected of us and that these expectations were absolute and right.”

Burgkunstadt, like most of Bavaria in the early years of this century, was Catholic. There were no Protestant children in the community, and the government elementary schools were parochial. Professor Goitein recalled that

there was one large Catholic school and one very small one-room Jewish school. Our Jewish school had eight grades and a Sunday school for teenage girls — and only one teacher. Still, the results were excellent because from a very tender age we were trained to have initiative, to occupy ourselves, and also to teach others.

Goitein counts the four years in this one-room school among the blessings of his training as an educator. “Group teaching,” he stated, “became second nature with me.” During the ten years (1938-1948) when, in addition to his professorship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he was the British Mandate’s Government Inspector of Jewish schools north of Natanya in Palestine, the lesson of the Burgkunstadt one-room school stood him in excellent stead. “I often was able to help teachers in Israeli schools, where classes were so heterogenous, by showing them how by constantly grouping and regrouping they could make teaching more effective.”

A rather typical day for Goitein, in those years, was “six hours at the British Government education office, three hours teaching at the Hebrew University, and several hours at his desk in the evening.” Among the “absolute” values of his parents’ home, good working habits were inculcated from early childhood. Later, during what he refers to as his “formative years” (from age fourteen to twenty-three), in addition to pursuing his studies for a Ph.D. in Arabic, with a thesis on “Prayer in the Qur’an,” Zionism became an “absolute value” for him. This meant going on Aliyah after getting his Ph.D. at the age of twenty-three. During his student days, he headed two Jewish youth organizations, one of university students and the other, Blau-Weiss, the Zionist youth group. Goitein recalls that “in addition to general leadership, which also meant hiking and nurturing that closeness we know in this country from the youth Havurot, I had to teach, especially Bible and other Hebrew subjects to the girls who had too little of this in school.” It was my good fortune to be one of these girls and, during my recent visit with the Goiteins, we reminisced about the Blau-Weiss days and the opposition that we met within the community and, in some cases, from our parents as well.

Ideological differences, however, did not infringe upon personal relations and friendship. Goitein recalled the denunciation of the Blau-

Weiss by Gershom Scholem (at that time he was still “Gerhard” and Goitein was “Fritz”) which, nevertheless, did not disrupt their warm friendship. Though Scholem’s first several published articles were attacks on Blau-Weiss, he remained a frequent guest at the Goitein home in Frankfurt and the two friends made Aliyah together in September 1923. Scholem’s description of the young Goitein of sixty years ago still fits the eminent scholar today. “Goitein” wrote Scholem, “was a rare blend, for he was a person with an artistic, even poetic, vein who was at the same time a scholar and a born schoolmaster.”

Unlike Scholem, who was determined to work only in Jewish scholarship, that is, Jewish mysticism, Goitein did not want to be an academic scholar. “My ideal was to be an educator who does not only teach children but lives with them” in a children’s village. Shortly after arriving in Palestine, he started teaching at the Reali School of Haifa. But the “poetic vein” got the best of him before long and he decided to write plays. “My first and only published drama,” he recalls, “was *Pulcellina*, the name of a fascinating woman who died at the stake in France in 1171.”

Eventually, however, the “scholar” emerged victorious when, in 1928, Goitein joined the faculty of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem from which he retired in 1957 after serving also as Director of the University’s School of Oriental Studies. During these thirty years, he produced a score of books and hundreds of learned papers, many in his main field of research during those years, the Arabic vernacular and the life of the Jews of Yemen. While most of these studies are for linguists and ethnologists, Goitein “the teacher” also published numerous text-books, especially “guides” for teachers on how to teach the Bible and Hebrew “to Hebrews,” that is, children whose mother tongue is Hebrew. Two other, frequently reprinted popular books are the *Tales from the Land of Sheba* and the much-quoted and reprinted *Jews and Arabs: Their Contact Through the Ages*.

In the Preface to Volume II of *A Mediterranean Society* Goitein writes that “it was difficult — and possible only under extreme privation — to produce a volume like the one presented here.” When I asked him how he managed to finance his eighteen research seasons in Cambridge, he replied that he and Mrs. Goitein, a teacher of eurythmics, would teach summer courses in Europe so as to be able to pay for their stay in Cambridge. As is usually the case, the large financial awards came after Goitein’s years of “extreme privation” for his *A Mediterranean Society*.

Perhaps the greatest “privation” was that, in 1957, Goitein decided to accept the invitation of the University of Pennsylvania to be Professor of Arabic and Islamics, so as to be free from his many obligations as a “public person” in Israel. Uprooting himself from Jerusalem and Israel, where his three children and seven grandchildren live, was, and is, difficult for him and for Theresa, his wife of fifty-six years, who is an accomplished

musician. He misses the "ambience" of Jerusalem, especially the Shabbat afternoons, when the Goiteins were at home for their many friends.

An activist by temperament, Goitein was never a cloistered scholar, but the Geniza project required complete concentration. This was impossible in Israel where he was always called upon to serve as an expert on education and, also, to take a stand on political and cultural issues. "I was an avid writer of 'Letters to the Editor,'" he told me, "and also wrote many articles for the Hebrew papers, *Ha-Aretz* and *Davar*." When I asked him about his opinion on the Begin policies and the gap between Israelis of Western provenance and Israelis of the Eastern communities (*e'dot ha-mizrah*) he replied that, today, he only "scans" the newspapers. He is too much into the Geniza to spare the time for extensive study of the contemporary scene. Moreover, he is also eager to complete some of his scholarly projects which he set aside during the thirty-five years of Geniza studies.

Energetic and in good health, Goitein makes the most of his day. He wakes up at 5:00 A.M. and after what he describes as a long *levée* and a fifteen-minute walk, he is at his desk from seven to twelve. After lunch and a siesta, he works another four hours or so. "To spend an afternoon *not* at my desk is unthinkable," he said. Equally unthinkable is not to take a 45-minute walk in the evening, with a stretch of the road uphill.

As the extensive files that Goitein uses are in a room adjoining the room where he has his desk, "I am a lot on my feet," he said. And he also gets "exercise" helping Mrs. Goitein, about the house and in the kitchen.

When I suggested that housework was not "dignified" for a scholar of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, with which he has been associated since 1971, Professor Goitein objected, saying that helping with household chores has given him new insights into the importance of the home-maker.

With respect to home-makers, Professor Goitein considers himself an expert. "As soon as I step over the threshold of a home, I *know* whether the lady of the house is a home-maker." He believes wholeheartedly in the equality of women and affirms that all occupations and professions should be open to women, but, he added, "women have talents we men lack." He thinks that there is no substitute for the care of a mother for her small children and for providing the special spirit that creates a family home.

While it seems strange to me that Professor Goitein derives "lessons" from household chores, it seemed "strange" to him that life in America helped him to an understanding of the Geniza society. In the Preface to Volume II of *A Mediterranean Society*, he writes:

... strangest of all, I believe I would have missed many aspects of the Geniza documents had I not been granted the opportunity of observing the American scene for many years. Authoritarian Germany, where I spent my childhood and youth, and the Jewish society in Palestine and later Israel, with its

socialist, welfare and protectionist tendencies, which saw most of my working life, were utterly different from the Geniza society, which was loosely organized and competitive in every way. This free enterprise society of the United States . . . proved to be extremely instructive to me. We do not wear turbans here; but while reading many a Geniza document one feels quite at home.

In 1970, when he wrote the Preface from which the above is quoted, Professor Goitein emphasized that for him

the main task of Geniza research [is] the systematic edition of the original texts with full translations, commentaries and facsimiles. As a matter of fact, most of my time during the last eighteen years has been devoted to the preparation of such an undertaking.

The texts, which he uses for writing his *A Mediterranean Society*, are filed in proper order in two large floor-to-ceiling shelved closets in the Goitein home. But he no longer thinks it necessary to publish what he considered so important thirteen years ago. He explained that he has “many *excellent* (he repeated and emphasized *excellent*) students who publish Geniza texts and do remarkable Geniza research.” He named some of these younger scholars and urged me to study their books, but was reluctant to be quoted “lest I forgot to mention some of these excellent students.”

Texts are all-important for Goitein, but it is equally important to understand them not only as texts of history, but as a mirror and in the context of life — one’s own life experiences. Even his work as British Government Mandatory senior education officer “helped to throw light into many a dark corner of the Geniza world.” Even more important insights have come from Goitein’s personal contacts with Yemenites, “those most Jewish and most Arab of all Jews.”

As a result of being attuned to life, Goitein’s “harvest” is not only monumental books but, also, and, perhaps even more important to him, students who continue his work.

Action and Non-Action in Jewish Spirituality

MICHAEL FISHBANE

To Professor Nahum Glatzer on his eightieth birthday

LIKE COUNTLESS OTHERS I HAVE LEARNED much from Prof. Glatzer, in whom we have an example of the ideal that nothing Jewish be alien to us. He is a living example of believing scholarship — of scholarship that moves from life to learning and back again; of scholarship whose tasks are posed by the mystery of reality, and which results in new faithfulness to God's mysterious but addressing presence. Above all else, he exemplifies a special way of holiness in the world — the way of action and non-action.

Let me explain these terms. About a decade ago, at the close of a conversation, I was moved to ask Prof. Glatzer a question. I have always been deeply affected by the episode reported at the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, when Socrates asks Cephalus, an elder, about old age and the meaning of life. Obviously, one chooses one's elders carefully for such questions. I asked Prof. Glatzer what, in the end, were Judaism's theological and moral imperatives to him in his life. His answer was that a person must try to receive the tasks of the hour and respond to them fully. Here was a living teaching about a living relationship with the divine presence. But the human spirit, mired in ego or self-absorption, does not hear the tasks of the hour; futile striving and self-aggrandizement must cease in order that the divine initiative be present to the quietly waiting self.

These twin poles of deed and creative receptivity — of action and non-action — are, I believe, at the center of Prof. Glatzer's concern. For these reasons I would like to offer a few reflections on some dimensions of these two features in the history of Jewish spirituality.



Among the great religions of the West, probably none has attributed so much value to action as has Judaism — the inheritor of the Hebrew Bible and its dauntless transformer. But, of course, the meaning and value of true action has a very special character in Judaism; for in it proper action is sanctioned by the divine will as revealed at Sinai and

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interpreted by the sages and rabbis. Indeed, because the ultimate source of action is in the autonomous will of God, the individual person is both dependent upon the transcendent God for all values and is characterized by faithful obedience to them. This is dramatized and expressed over and over again in the Hebrew Bible. For example, in the magisterial first chapter of Genesis the creator god is portrayed as independent of the world order. In fact, by virtue of this qualitative otherness of God from the world, a primordial mythic bond is severed, so that the world in which mankind develops is a neutral space thoroughly demystified of inherent value or latent divinity. Elohim, the creator god who called the world hierarchy into order, is thus the only source of value. It is solely His Will that makes some actions good and others evil; some sacred and others profane; some pure and others impure. Mankind has no innate source of truth or value, but receives it from this transcendent god. In short, it is only from this god that the world is filled with values and meanings; for it is only from the revelations of this god that the world is filled with true tasks and actions: the commandments, or *mizvot*.

Actions are, therefore, given to biblical man to do and to obey. He is told, moreover, to love the giver of these actions; and this means, especially, that he should express this love in devoted service and obedience: *as prescribed*. Thus, after the announcement to the Israelites in Deuteronomy, chapter 6, that their Elohim, their God is the only One, they are told to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart." This means, as the text goes on to say, to bear this devotion always in mind, and to teach it, in order that it may be performed. *Amor dei*, love of god, is thus not an internal state, but an act of outward devotion; absolute commitment and acknowledgment, through public performance of the true actions, that one is a follower of the will of this covenanting, revealing god — and not a follower of self-will, personal desire, or even the "oth gods." For, clearly, to act on one's own, on the basis of non-sanctioned values, is to be a sinner and to incur divine wrath. From this perspective, sin is the archetypal non-action; it is the promethean and misguided claim that non-revealed, self-willed human actions have independent value. It is then, because of impatience and self-will, because of self-illusory blindness to his creatureliness, that mankind is, ever since Eden, a stumbler within history, acting with itself as a reference point. But all is not lost. For in the Bible — as in Judaism — the sinful revolt of self-derived actions may be transcended by obedience to the covenantal revelation. Indeed, this latter tries to reestablish a sphere of proper actions by linking all the beneficence to obedience to the divine Will. To act rightly is to reap the good fruits of this earth, while to act wrongly is to suffer in all ways. A paradoxical concession has thus been made to human self-interest, which is now reframed. For, now, self-interest, the root of the revolt against God, can be attained by relinquishing one's desire to be an autonomous source of values by total obedience to the revealing god of the Bible.

Judaism accepted the premises of biblical religiosity just outlined, and filled the life-realm with a plenitude of sanctioned actions — with Halakhah. In time, all of life, every nook and cranny of it, and every act between persons and towards God, was increasingly regulated by normative prescriptions. All the minutiae of action were defined: indeed, veritable mountains of sanctioned actions hung by the threads of human exegesis. Actions and deeds, *mizvah* and *avodah*, are thus fundamental religious categories in Judaism, and assert that everywhere and always the Jew can be related to God. Huge collections of proper actions, like the *Sefer ha-Mizvot ha-Gadol*, were published, and codes and commentaries abounded in all the study halls of world Jewry. In reality, very little space was left for expressions of self-will — except, of course, that of rebellion. The interior world of the person was valued only to the extent that it motivated compliance with the innumerable proper actions. So much, in fact, was halakhic action and study the true measure that one can find in the Talmud a maxim like “Whosoever wishes to be pious should assiduously fulfill the prescriptions of (the Order of) Damages” (*B. Qam* 30a).

The great abyss between man and God that is opened up by the first chapter of Genesis was thus filled with sanctioned actions. And this led to tangible hopes. For to attach oneself to right action was not only to remove oneself from evil; it was also to bring oneself to holiness and nearness to God. Indeed, for biblical religion and Judaism generally, nearness to God is a nearness mediated through the *mizvot*, since they contain or represent His will. Even more significantly, this relationship to God through performance of the proper actions created a direct link between the human actor and the Source of all life — for the Revealer of the religious culture was also the Creator of the natural world. Indeed, since it is the divine which maintains through blessing, or disrupts through curse, all national and natural life, obedience to God is a veritable act of social and world maintenance. And more, in the medieval Kabbalah, the *mizvot* were even believed to maintain the cosmos *as such*. Hints of the sacramental status of some commandments appear already in early rabbinic sources, where, for example, the rite of circumcision and the rituals of the Sabbath are called *razim*, or mysteries, like the Christian *mysteria* (mysteries) to which these attributions may be a response. At any rate, the full sacramental quality of religious actions is fully established only in that stream of Jewish religiosity which appears in the 13th century *Book of Splendor*, the *Zohar*, and in various Kabbalistic texts of that and later periods. For, in these texts, religious actions are rooted in the Godhead itself, so that proper human performance of the divine commandments actually activates dynamic movements in the supernal realms. The proper performance of sanctioned actions thus sustains the harmony of the cosmic spheres whereas improper actions (sins and transgressions), block the flow of divine energy which otherwise vitalizes all being. Sin, then, is doubly destructive; it both cuts off our human world from its life source, and

fragments and disunifies the divine realm, so to speak. Man, the self-willer, can thus pull the string along the edge of the divine garment which cloaks this world and reduce it to a ball of yarn.

The powerful impact of these notions on both intellectual and popular Jewish religiosity, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, cannot be minimized.



We may now focus a bit more carefully on the rewards, or “fruits,” of action. As observed, Judaism deals with the nature of action in its relationship to a personal divine will, and not, as in eastern religions, in its relation to an impersonal source of Truth. Thus, in Judaism, attempts to purify sanctioned actions from self-centeredness took the form of stressing the values of obedience as such. “Do not be like servants who serve the master for the sake of reward,” states an old epigram preserved in the name of Antigonos of Sokho, “but let the fear of Heaven be upon you” (*Avot*, I, 3). And, in an even more radical comment, preserved in the *Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (II 32, p. 71), it is said:

If you have done His (God's) will as though it were your will, you have not yet done His will as though it were His will. But if you have done His will as though it were not your will, then you have done His will as though it were His will.

This statement cannot be dismissed as a radical aberration, for it draws forth the consequence of the fact that the divine Will is absolutely other than the human will. Before God, the human will must nullify all egoistical *self-reference* — even that which ostensibly results in pious actions. Thus, the text goes beyond the statement that true divine service lies in the thorough identification of one's will with the divine will. It goes beyond it in order to radicalize the difference between God and Man, in order to emphasize that true piety lies wherever God's willed actions are performed *just because* they are God's willed actions — and for no other reason. Judaism came to vary on this point. But this text nonetheless allows us to perceive a subtle shift taking place in the heart of prescribed and sanctioned actions: for proper actions performed with the self and its interests in mind are hereby deemed of lesser quality than a totally purified obedience.

The tracings of a purification of the divine-human relationship, beyond all attachment to self-interest, and to the fruits of rewards and blessings for proper action, occur in the Hebrew Bible itself — principally in the Book of Job. Here, the individual called Job is portrayed as a paradigm of the type of religiosity which biblical covenantal piety had succeeded in developing over the centuries: scrupulous obedience in outward actions and sincere attentiveness to inner intentions. Job is not only personally obedient, but duplicates the sacrifices of his children, fearful that they may have misacted through ambivalence or inadvertence.

Through such sacrifices, Job is able to demonstrate his selfless obedience and to relinquish the fruits of the earth to their divine source.

Giving up the fruits of the earth is one thing, but it is quite another matter to give up the fruits of a rationalized and legalized divine-human relationship. For we must remember that Job is the heir of a solid covenantal tradition, one which, long since, had sought to domesticate the unpredictable in God and to reduce Him to a calculus of expectations — whereby obedience brought blessing and sin brought a curse. “If you obey My commandments,” speaks the divine voice in the eleventh chapter of Deuteronomy, “then you will have rain in its season;” “but if you do not,” your earth will be like iron and no rain will fall. Such statements, which recur again and again in Scripture, suggest a remythologization of the divine-human relationship. At the beginning, as it were, a primary demythologizing had taken place through the radical separation of God from nature. But the abyss thus established was overcome by a legalization, even remythologization, of God’s relationship to the earth — since divine behaviors became, increasingly, functions of human behavior. The test that the Satan proposes, therefore — and this Satan is, I would think, a vestige of the unpredictable in God — is to see whether Job could remain steadfast in his obedience in the face of crushing circumstances. Restated, Job’s test is whether he could serve God gratuitously, without hope or expectation of benefit; whether he could serve the transcendent revelation and relinquish even the most minimal divine acknowledgment of this service.

The test is, thus, a radical one, for it flies in the face of the entire theological inheritance of ancient Israel. At first, Job responds with unswerving piety. He accepts his sufferings as from God, acknowledging this God as the source of all good and evil, all life and death. Such is the prologue. But the encounters with the friends reflect a different Job entirely. Here he rails at God; here he cavils, kicks and curses. Job knows he has been pious and will accept none of the shop-worn theology of the friends. He knows this theology and mocks it. The friends can keep their abstract, traditional theories of rewards and punishments, he says — for just how does it work in his case?! Job demands a divine vindication.

The arguments go round and round. They are sometimes more rational, sometimes less; sometimes more theologically subtle, sometimes less. In all, they weary Job to despair. For imagine: there he is, a man portrayed in the opening chapters as of exemplary piety. Doesn’t he know the old verities by heart? Doesn’t he know the irrelevance of the old scholarly solutions and the pompous circularity of these arguments? Undoubtedly so. If, then, Job must wade through this tiresome process, is it not to prepare him for new spiritual insights? So it seems; for it is only when the rational arguments simply stop, depleted of energy, that Job is addressed by Elihu and guided to an understanding of his suffering that is altogether beyond reason. He is told simply to attend to his dreams, to his

pain, and to the world of nature. Simply to attend to them! — for these three forms: dreams, pain and nature, in their complexity, in their dark depths, and in their utter independence of mankind's contrivances, mock all human attempts to construct straight-jacket theologies.

And then comes the divine voice from the whirlwind — and what a voice it is! It breathes forth, in image after image, the play and diversity of existence *as such*. No covenant is mentioned; no law or legalistic theology is mentioned; in fact, not the slightest mention of mankind can be detected. What is presented, in short, is a cascade of life: of life billowing and unyielding; fighting and delicate; uncanny and reasonable; sinewy and bountiful. And so, with one mighty stroke, the entire biblical theology of the “fruits” of action is blasted to smithereens. For out of the whirlwind, the God of Scripture has demythologized Himself and restored to Himself His own pure Selfhood — far beyond the rational constructions and constrictions of theology.

But how, now, should Job act? What actions lie beyond Job's acknowledgment that he is but dust and ashes, and his experience of this awesome and frightening Creator? Should we say that he simply returns to life with this new knowledge and lives outside of the law — since obedience is not mentioned in the epilogue? From a biblical point of view this is extremely doubtful. Rather should we take a canonical perspective here. The Book of Job was probably preserved in the canon as a corrective to the legalization of the divine-human relationship; as a theological summons to perform the sanctioned actions of the covenant without regard to self-interest: solely as acts of obedience.



Perhaps it is possible to live a life of piety with one eye on the divine voice from the whirlwind and another on the divine voice from the thunder at Sinai. Perhaps not. For the present we must leave this theological matter as an open, honest challenge, and turn to two quite different expressions of action and non-action in Jewish spirituality.

Bahya ibn Paquda was a religious judge, a *dayyan*, in Saragosa, Spain, in the eleventh century. He deeply intuited that the covenantal-halakhic piety which he inherited, with its fundamental concerns on reward and punishment, was a problem for a fully developed spirituality. Since, for him, Judaism was divinely given and true, he could not go beyond its system. What he did was transvaluate it from within.

As Bahya says, in the Introduction to his religious classic, *The Duties of the Heart*, he wanted to fill a great lack in the Judaism of his day by giving expression to the principles of religious devotion which must underlie a life of true halakhic piety. Since he wanted to purify the rational will, and make it perfectly obedient to the will of God, his treatise is permeated with such practical guidance as would enable a religious seeker to purify his or her divine service. According to Bahya, the seeker must start with a

consciousness which has been totally transformed by a recognition of the divine majesty and presence evident in this world and by the fact of one's ultimate dependence upon this omnipresent and omnipotent divine Being. This realization will lead, in turn, to obedient religious action. Along this path, the religious consciousness of the seeker must divest itself of the obstructions of an unfocused or recalcitrant will, and must be ever vigilant to detect manifestations of self-will or self-centered concern. In order to become a perfected instrument of the transcendent divine will, uncompromising trust in the providence and beneficence of divinity is required. The humble submission of every aspect of selfhood to God is the ideal. This emphasis on the purification of the human will, and its progressive withdrawal from this world and its attractions towards a ceaseless attachment to God, is the spiritual component of Bahya's religious asceticism.

The devotional inwardness taught by Bahya is of immense spiritual significance and constitutes a remarkable transformation of the positive focus on actions in biblical religion and Talmudic Judaism. For while he never denies the positive, public performances of the commandments, he is much more concerned with the purity of religious intention and will. So much is this the case that Bahya thought that physical actions may be regarded as the outward signs of one's spiritual development, of the perfectedness and God-directed unity of one's will. Under this spiritual aspect, it goes without saying that actions are not to be judged solely in terms of their mundane effects. Since the religious ideal is to become a perfected instrument of God's truth as revealed through His will, actions are principally the means toward, and a measurement of, this ideal.

This remarkable rehierarchyization of the value of religious action affects the doctrine of reward and punishment as well. To be sure, the old notions are constantly referred to (e.g., III.3), and a focus on rewards has central weight in Bahya's thought insofar as the rational will knows the truth of this principle for this world and the one to come. But since his entire vision is charged by the moral-religious challenge of spiritual perfectability, the old doctrine of reward and punishment is pushed to the background. For him, persons at a lower level of religious consciousness may obey God out of fear of rewards and punishments, but once the rational will predominates (III.3) there is a difference. Those of purified spirituality are so focused on God and His service that they "are not concerned with reward or punishment" (III.4). For the truly devoted, neither praise nor blame, gladness nor pain, honor nor defamation, isolate the will from its adhesion, or *devekut*, to divine service in love. Such a person, purified of self-centered thoughts, is, in truth, a chariot of the divine self that fills his entire being. Selfness, ego, is extinguished by humility, trust and obedience.

And, so, an intriguing religious paradox may be observed. In the teachings of Bahya, the supreme personalization of God and His will

leads to a religious ideal of love of God in which the status of the human personality *as such* is remarkably diminished. The religious ideal is rather one of non-personality — since the human self strives for transcendence in all the divine Self, and the human will strives for negation in the divine Will. All personal feelings are thus devalued in face of the possibility that the religious devotee may become a maximal expression of the will of God. At such a consummate point, all that would truly manifest itself on earth is the divine Will. Human actions would be but selfless, depersonalized expressions of the divine Will made actual. In this ideal, partially realized in a life of selfless piety, only God acts. Here, then, is the mysterious truth known by all spiritual teachers: that true action arises out of a deep human stillness, out of non-action.



As is well-known, Bahya's *Duties of the Heart* was frequently read in 18-19th century Hasidism. In fact, there are many striking thematic continuities between his book and the teachings of this movement. For example, the ideal of a selfless devotion and adhesion to God, so forcefully stressed by Bahya, was particularly emphasized by the Ba'al Shem Tov, the spiritual founder of Hasidism, for whom the spiritual goal of annihilation of self, or self-negation, was the goal of a perfected human religiosity. Indeed, as if to underscore his break from older watchwords of faith, he reversed, or paradoxically transformed, many old rabbinic sayings. For example, the famous epigram of Hillel, "If I am not for myself, for whom am I; but if I am only for myself, what am I?" was understood to mean: If I have become Naught — that is, if I have annihilated myself in the divine Nothing; the hidden conjunction of all opposites, the plentitudinous repository of all Being — if I have become Naught, who am I? Surely nothing! But if I am for myself, if I am filled with selfness, just what am I? Surely a *self-ish* person, cut off from my spiritual roots! Can one imagine a more radical reversal of the old rabbinic dictum? Or again, taking up the psalmist's remark, "I have set the Lord before me, always," the Ba'al Shem, following in the old Stoic ideal of *ataraxia* — or calm indifference to fate — as it had come down through Bayha, taught that one should regard everything in this world as of equal value, that one should see all things as deriving from their divine source and, by this insight, to achieve a state of equanimity towards all actions and their "fruits."

But as striking as these ideas of the Ba'al Shem Tov are in themselves, they were considerably radicalized by his immediate disciple, the Maggid of Mezeritch, whose teachings bear directly on our theme of action and non-action in Judaism.¹

1. The central work on this spiritual master remains that of R. Shatz, *Ha-hasidut Ke-mystiqah* (Magnes: Jerusalem, 1968).

In many ways, early Hasidim introduced a spiritual revolution into the heart of Judaism. To discuss this point in all its aspects would take us too far afield, but we may simply start with the observation — quite clear by now — that for classical Judaism the status of divinely sanctioned actions is not a problematical matter. The aim of action lies in the simple fact of performance. However, for early Hasidism, while the strictness of this ideal was never compromised or denied, it was ultimately not the *fact* of performance which was significant, but rather the *how* of it. How was such sanctioned action performed? Was it done with a purified spirituality? Did it arise out of adhesion to God, or did it lead there?

We are thus brought to a very different perspective. The proper actions, the commandments, take on value in early Hasidism not because of any sacramental, or theosophical, status; not because of any intellectual content that they might have. They do so simply because of their inherent spiritual content; simply because of their inherent capacity to bring one to a relationship with the pure will of God; simply because of their latent capacity to carry one beyond the borders of our material world, in which human actions are performed, to the realm of pure spirit. In a word, actions are valued precisely for their capacity to lead one beyond the experience of self and self-will to a transcendent absorption in the divine Self and the divine Will. Undoubtedly, just because the inner-core of divinely sanctioned actions and performance had been so radically transformed there was great — exceedingly great — emphasis in early Hasidism on the scrupulous performance of the commandments. But such actions were not valued in and of themselves. They were valuable only because of the spiritual content and potential which lay within them. In fact, one of the disciples of the Maggid even went so far as to say that mere performance is “bad.” The pilgrimage from Sinai to Mezeritch is thus nothing short of a transvaluation of values.

Thus, we are on the border of a delicate and far-reaching religious paradox. On the one hand, the sanctioned actions of Judaism are derived from God, so that an active religious life of performance, a *vita activa*, is an ideal. On the other hand, the commandments have come to be reunderstood as new possibilities for transcendence, whereby the individual self and will can be annihilated in the divine Nothing, and so an even higher ideal of ultimate passivity, of a *vita passiva*, is espoused. For the perfected, or perfectable, human will the only goal is attachment to God and absorption in His totality, in His holy Nothingness. Nothing else is of any consequence. One must abandon desires, self-interest, and concern with the “fruits” of action — these being rewards and punishments, and one must become indifferent to all earthly consequences. Fully realizing the psalmist’s dictum that “The whole world is filled with His glory,” one must strive to lose oneself in the absolute fullness of the divine reality in which all is one, and in which all is equal before God. This is the state of

spiritual equanimity concerning which both Bahya and the Ba'al Shem Tov spoke.

But in the second generation of Hasidism this is radicalized. For built into this religious ideal of annihilation of the self in the divine will, built into the perfection of self which comes when one overcomes ego and self-regard through discipline and divine grace, is the ultimate ideal of passivity, in which one is the will-ness instrument of the omnipresent divine life and will. Here only God acts. When one has achieved this high ideal of contemplation and self-loss the only true actions are those of God. Human actions are ultimately lost in the pure state where one really does not act, *where non-action is the religious ideal*. Thus, you may look at a person engaged in prayer, or in the fulfillment of the action-commandments, and never know that such a person is, in truth, neither praying nor acting. For, in truth, it is the holy Shekhinah, the divine presence, which is speaking his words and moving his body. When a person is truly attached to God, such a one is only apparently acting in this world. In reality, it is only God who acts. And this applies even to that consummate of acts — the act of teaching Torah. When a person is truly attached to God, such a one is only apparently teaching Torah in this world. In reality, it is only God who so teaches. Thus, remarkable as it may sound — and for this we have both the testimony of the Maggid's faithful disciples and that of the sceptic Solomon Maimon — the Maggid taught and demonstrated that a perfected human soul, which has annihilated self-will and self-regard, could teach Torah through the divine speech which would then speak automatically through him.

You must cease to be aware of yourself (said the Maggid of Mezeritch about the true way to teach Torah). You must cease to be aware of yourself. You must be nothing but an ear which hears what the universe of the word is saying to you. The moment you hear what you yourself are saying, you must stop!

For such a teacher, the human powers of speech are purely linked to the divine principle of speech, and the human powers of thought are perfectly joined to the divine principle of thought. What is manifest by such teachers then, is not human wisdom but divine truth — and that alone. “*Hashlekh ‘al Ha-Shem yehabekha*,” give up to God every longing, every desire, every interest and every expectation — was a famous early Hasidic saying. Give these up and you will be nothing; for you will be part of the divine Nothing; you will not act, for, indeed, the Shekhinah, whose limbs you constitute in this world, though you do not know it with your material, earthly mind, is the only true actor. “*Hashlekh ‘al Ha-Shem yehabekha*” — give all up to God, that God's reality may be actualized in every human act, in every human word, in every human teaching.

Within Judaism, this ideal religious state never reached the level of complete indifference to morality, to action, or to law — as did the comparable, if more radical, expressions of religious quietism known to

us from the writings of Catholic mystics like Molinos, St. John of the Cross, or Meister Eckhardt, or from the writings of the saints of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Nor could it. For the bottom line of all these spiritual paradoxes in Judaism was that God himself — or, more mystically put: a dimension within God — had revealed the sanctioned actions, the *mizvot*. Hence, to negate the commandments would be to negate the divine will towards which one yearned for absorption. Furthermore, since the ideal of *tikkun*, or repairing the fragmentation of the divine unity which occurred primordially and always through sin, remained in Hasidism, as a residue of the older system of Lurianic Kabbalah, the basis for positive, concrete actions continued. Indeed, since the sanctioned actions, the *mizvot*, were the fundamental means towards this eschatological goal of divine unification, they were absolutely necessary. For these and other reasons the radical spiritual concern to annihilate one's religious will in the divine Will, so that the individual person is no longer an actor, was considerably tempered and concealed in early Hasidism. As a token of this need to temper and conceal any implication that negation of action was taught, the Maggid of Mezeritch and his circle repeatedly cited the following ancient rabbinic Mishnah: "Any Torah — that is, any study or religious yearning — which is not accompanied by *melakhah*, by action, is ultimately worthless." Performance of the commandments thus ever remained a religious duty in Judaism even if, at its core, such performance was occasionally spiritualized radically. In effect, Hasidism withdrew from the radicality of its own spiritual insights.



Quite obviously, there is a long spiritual journey from Hillel's dictum, "If I am not for myself, who am I?" to the Ba'al Shem's interpretations, If I am part of the divine Naught — or Nothing — then I have no I; from Deuteronomy's caution, "If you obey My commandments, then . . ." to the Maggid's watchword to abandon one's self to God; from the divine revelation at Sinai to the revelation in the Book of Job, and on to the possible renewal of revelation in the mouth of a person whose actions have been stilled by a total meditative absorption in the mystical Nothing of God. Souls so absorbed are called in our Hasidic sources, "dead souls." Such a phrase conjures up the reality of a perfected person whose actions are non-actions, since they are the actions of God, and whose apparent non-action, whose meditative stillness, cloaks the most active transports through the upper divine realms. In our modern world, however, I would hazard to say that the expression "dead souls" can hardly perform such a conjurer's trick, and merely evokes Nikolai Gogol's dead souls, with their sad, nameless faces, their depleted spiritual resources, their souls which are the battlegrounds of suspicious and dark motivations.

To be dead to one's self is thus no longer merely a mystical state, but a

waking reality. The ground of meaningful action has, in fact, been cut away in modernity to leave a more terrifying *nihil* — the nihilation of all meaning, together with its divine source. Franz Kafka is a modern master here — for in his stories and journal entries he exposed the full negativity of action. Martin Buber perceptively understood that Kafka's writings provide a commentary to the presuppositions of Psalm 82; for, like the author of this psalm, Kafka describes the human world as one which is given over to the power-brokers of history, who turn the world in a "confused game." To this Buber adds: "From the unknown One" — the true God — "who gave this world into their impure hands, no message of comfort or promise penetrates to us. He is, but is not present." Buber's words were written several years after the Second World War.

Speaking of Kafka's deep awareness that "man who has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge" is in exile from Life — from paradise — because of his act of impatience, Prof. Glatzer remarks:

If there is hope it can only come from patience, from quiet waiting, from a withdrawal into the realm of creative inactivity that must precede all deed, from the stillness of soul that precedes the breaking forth of will, from the calmness of the spirit in which intuitive life is born. In this realm there is no desire, striving and scheming, no struggle for success and achievement . . .²

"Be calm," Kafka advises Janouch. "Quietness is . . . a sign of strength. Calmness and quietness make one free." "In quietude and rest you will be saved, in silence and trust lies your strength," said the prophet Isaiah with an identical insight, 2600 years earlier.

For Franz Kafka, in the words of Prof. Glatzer,

The Tree of Knowledge represents the truth of activity (*die Wahrheit des Tätigen*), the Tree of Life stands for nondoing . . . — the truth of quietude (*die Wahrheit des Ruhenden*). The first truth we acquired in reality, the second is ours only by intuition.

Not by intuition alone, however, but by example, too; like the example of Prof. Glatzer's way of creative inactivity, of action and non-action with the freedom to behold the Tree of Life which is hidden within the Tree of Knowledge.

2. See Glatzer's "Franz Kafka and the Tree of Knowledge," reprinted in *Arguments and Doctrines*, ed. by A.A. Cohen (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 88-97, esp. pp. 96f.

Watchman, What of the Lies? — Nordau's Lügen at 100

MEIR BEN-HORIN

MAX NORDAU, MD (1849-1923), PHILOSOPHER, psychiatrist, novelist, playwright, essayist, social critic, art critic, journalist and one of Europe's foremost orators, joined his friend, Dr. Theodor Herzl, in the founding of the World Zionist Organization in 1897. Indirectly, therefore, he is one of the founding fathers of the State of Israel. A few days after the closing of the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Herzl wrote to Nordau on 10 September, 1897:

For me, the anguish of the days in Basle was that, by force of circumstance, you had to occupy the second place where the first was rightly yours. My admiration for you was not capable of greater fervor, but my affection has thereby grown only stronger and deeper.

In his Diary, Herzl noted on 17 November, 1895 that,

Nordau was the easiest to conquer and is perhaps the most valuable conquest thus far. He would make a good President for our Academy or Minister of Education [in the Jewish State].

On the occasion of Nordau's fiftieth birthday, 29 July, 1899, Herzl sent him a message which read, in part:

We met in a wilderness [in 1892] and recognized each other as brothers. . . . Oratorically *you* are the Congress. Without false modesty, I believe that my hand holds it together, but you are its voice that speaks to Europe.

It was Nordau who, at the First Zionist Congress, formulated the famed Basle Program which defined the goal or *Endziel* of Zionism as "the creation for the Jewish people of a publicly recognized, legally secured Home in Palestine." Ze'ev Jabotinsky was to call the text of the Program in its entirety the most classical of Nordau's writings: "In the ten lines the aims and methods of the movement are exhaustively defined, with an architectonic beauty, grace, and finesse which remind me of the temples on the Acropolis in Athens."

The following dedication opens the first edition of *Max Nordau's Zionist Writings*, published in German on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, 29 July, 1909:

To Max Nordau, the mighty tribune who, a newly-arisen Jeremiah, has uttered the lamentations of our people with soul-stirring power; to the forceful pleader of our cause, the herald of our Zion ideal, . . . the Actions

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Committee of the Zionist Organization, in deep-felt recognition of his everlasting achievement, dedicates this popular edition of his Zionist addresses and writings — for the contemporaries a tower of light shining with the brightness of genius, for posterity a glorious monument.

Nordau's most notable prediction came in his address before the Tenth Zionist Congress in 1911. He warned those who were present, the Jewish people, and the world that if current political, economic, philosophical, and artistic trends were to continue unchecked, then six million Jews would be physically annihilated in Europe.

Nordau's bibliography is an extensive one,¹ and as early as the summer of 1883 he had become a household word in many parts of the world shortly after the publication of *Die konventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit* (The Conventional Lies of Civilized Mankind). Within seven months seven editions appeared. Eight weeks after distribution had begun, the Imperial Council of Vienna prohibited the further sale of the book and confiscated all the copies that it could find. In the words of Nordau's preface to the sixth edition of 10 February, 1884, the *Lügen* were officially condemned because of the "crime of insulting the members of the Imperial family," the "crime of disturbing the public peace by attempting to arouse contempt or hatred for the person of the Emperor," the "crime of denouncing religion" and "inciting hostility against religious communities," and "the crime of insulting a church and sect recognized by the State." The book was publicly burned; the Pope condemned it; Tsarist Russia banned it. Within two years, three separate editions appeared in America.² Translations were published in Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Spanish, Rumanian, Czech, Hungarian, Hebrew,

1. Among the major works, other than *The Conventional Lies of Civilized Mankind*, are *Paradoxes*, which enlarges upon some of the themes of the *Lügen*; *From the Kremlin to the Alhambra*, in which he speaks of his travels in Germany, Russia, France, Iceland, Spain; *How Women Love*; *The Right to Love*; *Degeneration* (in two volumes), in which he subjected to detailed criticism *fin-de-siècle* society, the symptoms of its decline (such as the enormous consumption of drugs and alcohol), diagnoses in psychological terms, and their origins and frequency; the pernicious mysticism of the Pre-Raphaelites and Symbolists as well as of Tolstoy and his followers and of Nietzsche and the Nietzsche cult as well as lesser writers, occultists and eroticists. Other major targets of Nordau's onslaught were Richard Wagner and Ibsenism. George Bernard Shaw countered with a sharp critique of Nordau in his *Sanity of Art*, as did Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University and Williams James of Harvard. But Lewis Mumford, in *In the Name of Sanity* (1954), who named as the three most influential books of the late nineteenth century Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Wells' *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress*, and Nordau's *Degeneration*, thought that, despite shoddy evidence, Nordau nonetheless had "a curiously sound intuition of the future" about war and destruction and "Fascist slavery on a scale that had once been unthinkable." Other major works are the Zionist drama, *A Question of Honor*, the philosophical books on *The Meaning of History* and *The Biology of Ethics*; *French Statesmen*, and *The Great Masters of Spanish Art* (in Spanish). Unpublished have remained *The Essence of Morality* — the Spanish translation is inadequate and incomplete — and the biblical drama *Rahab* (see below).

2. In 1968, another American edition was published, with a Foreword by Prof. George W. Mosse.

Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Greek, Turkish. Almost overnight, Nordau, at thirty-two, was acknowledged as an international celebrity.

What was Nordau's purpose in writing the *Lügen* and what were his chief targets? As he put it, in the brief Foreword to the first edition, "the malady of the age is cowardice." People think it inexpedient to express their convictions, to allow actual beliefs to be reflected in overt action. They regard it as "politically" wise "to hold on, outwardly, to what is conventional or traditional, although in their innermost being they have broken with it." His purpose was to expose this cowardice and to strengthen, through understanding of available options, the will of enlightened men and women to work for a better society and a better world. On the negative side, this meant attacking and overcoming the "conventional lies."

The detailed discussion of these "lies" was introduced in a chapter which is pervaded by forebodings of crisis and approaching catastrophe. For its title Nordau chose "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," the ominous words which Daniel deciphered for King Belshazzar as meaning "God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end;" "thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting;" "thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:25-27). Nordau intended issuing a similar warning to Western civilization whose collapse he considered a distinct possibility because of its inner intellectual and moral corruption. He was convinced that the results of pervasive mendacity, duplicity, and hypocrisy were universal discontent, restlessness, nervousness, confusion, pessimism, "pain and fury over the unbearable actuality the world over." A terribly destructive explosion seemed imminent. But, far from welcoming violent revolution, Nordau sought to harness the explosive forces and channel them toward what he called "human solidarity," a new society based on reason, social justice, freedom, fraternity, and the opposite of destructive egotism — altruism. I have called his social vision "solidaritarianism" and have tried to work out its philosophical underpinnings and its social consequences, including political Zionism.

Nordau's primary "conventional lies" were "the religious lie," "the monarchic-aristocratic lie," "the economic lie," and "the marriage lie." The "lesser" lies included the notion that the press fully and honestly represents public opinion and conscience. They also included the hypocrisies of social relations, their obsequiousness, the maneuvering for position and for potential advancement or "image," intrigues for the sake of intrigues or for increased prestige and power, the sham of "entertainment," the idea that superior strength in duels and in war is evidence of ultimate right.

The core of the "religious lie," in Nordau's view, is not "the belief in extraterrestrial, supersensory powers." With most people, he said, this belief is sincere because they are unable to overcome anthropomorphism, the idea that all forces producing phenomena must necessarily resemble

human beings and, hence, must possess consciousness, will, and executive organs. Causes of things and events, therefore, can only be a personal god or gods, and these need to be appeased, pleased, worshipped by means of sacrifices, prayers, ceremonies, cultic performances. The difficulty of abstract thinking is, thus, one of the chief roots of religious faith. A second root, deeply embedded in man's emotionality, is the inability to conceive of his own death. "The conception of absolute non-existence is an effort beyond the power of the human intellect." Hence, the ideas of the soul, immortality, reward and punishment in the hereafter exert a powerful hold. We continue to view phenomena under the auspices of superstition and religious sentimentality because we are the heirs of the accumulated labors of countless generations who accepted the notion that causes must be man-like forces and that, inserted in our bodies there are souls whose immortality expresses man's will to live, to preserve the self. Nordau conceded that "the human soul has no more precious possession than the illusion. And what more splendid and more consoling illusion could be conceived than the self-deception by means of faith and prayer?" An extreme example of what Nordau did not regard as a religious lie is the case of a flier who falls from his plane. If this man is a freethinker, he will know that nothing can save his body from being smashed to bits in a few seconds. But if he is a believer, he will retain, throughout the fall,

the hope that on his behalf a supernatural power, which a fervent prayer can induce to intervene, will set aside the laws of nature for a moment and will set him down, gently and unharmed, on the ground. As long as consciousness endures, it is governed by the drive to self-preservation and clings obstinately to man's right to appeal against the irrevocable death sentence to a mythical, nebulous possibility.

But there is more to self-preservation than illusion and the will, which explains the hold of religion on human emotionality. This "more," according to Nordau, is "the need for an ideal," which lives even in the rudest of human hearts, and is indestructible. What is the ideal? "It is the remote type toward which mankind evolves and perfects itself. It is not merely the type of physical appearance but also the type of inner life, mode of thinking, form of society." The longing to attain the intuited ideal is organic in every human being. Nordau went so far as to say that "as long as mankind lives on earth and as long as it has not attained the summit of its development, it will persist in striving to fill out the invisible, preordained framework of its formation." This, then, is the yearning, dim or conscious, for the ideal. It is "the mighty desire to step out of individual solitude and in all its clarity to experience fellowship with our fellow-men." The bond which binds individual human beings together as a species and which raises the species to "an individual of a higher order," Nordau called "solidarity." The man of culture can satisfy the need to escape his solitude by immersing himself in history, philosophy, poetry,

the science of all ages or in discussion with his peers. But the common man, thus far, has been able to attain this goal only through religion:

The church was his banquet hall, the priest his learned friend, God and the saints his distinguished acquaintances. . . . In divine worship he found himself participating in an activity whose object was not directly his food and clothing, not his raw physical needs. In the midst of the other believers he felt himself to be an equal among members of a large community. . . . The sermon was the only higher form of speech he would hear.

What, then, is "the religious lie"? To Nordau, it is the reverential respect paid by men of culture to "the dogmas, the institutions, the festivals, ceremonies, symbols, and priests" of higher religions. All of this stands in the most blatant contradiction to what is actually respected and revered. Nordau's most glaring example is the particular awe with which both the Hebrew and the Christian Bible is approached. Its origin is known to be human. Its literary value often falls below that attained by Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare or Goethe at their best. The malicious vengeance attributed to God in the Old Testament and such episodes in the New Testament as that of Mary Magdalen and the women taken in adultery are "revolting." The liturgies are based on conceptions and customs which go back to the sun cult of the Aryans, the mysticism of Buddhists, the worship of Isis and Osiris in Egypt. A man, the moment he is elected pope, is assumed to have been chosen by the Holy Ghost to be Saint Peter's successor, to enjoy great influence with God. Where is the logic of those who ridicule the pretensions of a prophet in the Sudan, yet revere the Roman pontiff? Both, after all, claim to be God's first ministers.

It should be noted at this point that, according to Nahum Sokolow, president of the World Zionist Organization from 1931 to 1935, Nordau told him, in 1898, at the Second Zionist Congress, that he regretted the passages on the Bible in the *Lügen* and would delete them in the new edition. However, no retraction is sounded in Nordau's Foreword to a new printing, dated Spring 1909, which appeared a quarter of a century after the first publication; neither was the offensive passage omitted. It is true, however, that, in 1920, in connection with the wedding of his stepdaughter to the young writer Pierre Paraf, Nordau recommended to his wife and to his daughter, Maxa, the close reading of Proverbs 5: "When you read these incomparable twenty-three verses, remember that they were written, thought, and felt six to eight hundred years before the Nazarene." This biblical text would ensure the young girl's happiness, because, as a Jew, her husband was heir to ancient Israel's respect for woman. In this context it should also be kept in mind that Nordau wrote a biblical drama, entitled *Rahab*, which thus far has remained unpublished in either the German original or in translation. In its final scene, Joshua delivers a splendid oration in which he calls on Israel "to sanctify itself through repentance and prayer," and concludes with a solemn exhorta-

tion: "Now all lift up your hearts and souls to the Lord and praise Him aloud: Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is uniquely one (*einig-einzig*).” As the curtain slowly falls, the crowd, mostly troops, responds: "Hear, Israel, the Lord of armies and battles is our God, the Lord is *einig-einzig*!"

Nonetheless, Nordau remained a passionate critic of religion which he identified with supernaturalism. He was wrong in assuming that the scientific view of reality would rout its doctrines and institutions, but, precisely because of this apparent indestructibility, Nordau's kind of critique remains important. The airways on Sunday are filled with the most extraordinary assertions. Religious revivalism flourishes and amasses enormous riches. Never in history has a pope been so visible, so attractive, so persuasively articulate as John Paul II. But neither brilliant performance on the world stage nor endless repetition week in and week out argues the truth of many of the messages delivered about faith and God. Countless masses kneel and piously confess their transgressions. But the mind reels. Its believing and hoping craves unification with what is today known about being and becoming, about the nature of nature. As in Nordau's day, man's unified conscience and scientific knowledge needs to establish itself as the reconstructed civilization's *conventional truth*.

Thirty-five years after Nordau wrote his book, the German physiologist, psychologist, and philosopher, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), who has been called a modern Aristotle or Leibniz, commented on a strange fact of English intellectual and social life in his book, *Die Nationen und ihre Philosophie* (1918):

In the land of conventional freedom of faith it is not a rare phenomenon that one practices the greatest exactitude and independence in science, yet at the same time one is a member of a religious sect which professes a dogma altogether absurd.

Convention has become the decisive principle of ethics. To certain compelling rules of social conduct "the conventional lie is ineluctably linked" (pp. 45 f., 49, 124; my translation).

The second "conventional lie" surrounds monarchies and aristocracies. The notion of absolute monarchy is based on the divine rights of kings, a theory that requires us to sacrifice our reason on its altar. Beyond that, monarchical absolutism follows with complete logical consistency. If the monarch is commissioned by God, his person is sacred and he can do no wrong, even if he commits murder, rape, theft, perjury. The subject's duty is to obey. The king is entitled to rule because at birth he carries with him a pre-existing legitimacy. What, then, is the lie? It is "constitutional" monarchy. Its king must obey parliament. The address which he reads to its members "he reads as a record-player repeats the lines spoken into the receiver." Where the constitution enforces execution of the people's will, the king is merely a puppet. This is so despite his magnificent palace, splendid uniforms, munificent allowance, titles such as "gracious

majesty," or "illustrious highness," and colorful pageantry and homage from all sides.

Again, a century after the first appearance of the *Lügen*, this entire conventionality of royalty remains very much alive. Nordau's vigorous, often sardonic, denunciation failed to shake its foundations. Even in the final decades of the twentieth century it is not superfluous to be reminded of the incongruity between the pomp and circumstance of royal celebrations and the desperate conditions in which millions of people must live in many parts of the globe. Kings, queens, princes, and princesses, notably Their Arab Majesties, sit on thrones and they, and their offspring enjoy varying degrees of influence and respect. In principle, their existence makes a mockery of the idea that all men are created equal and share in the common dignity of man. That such potentates as Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or King Khalid ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be taken seriously as bona fide representatives of people living in "their" territories, remains a baffling conventionality, and is certainly one of the disharmonies of our time. To this issue, Nordau's discussion continues making a contribution.

So is what he has to say about patent nobility: "People act as if believing that a dull, frivolous dandy, just because he calls himself Count or Baron, was made of some finer stuff than the rest of the people." Even the American, Nordau wrote, who is said to adore the almighty dollar and to ridicule the differences of social class in the Old World, "is in his innermost heart delighted to adorn his drawing-room with the presence of a nobleman." But this nobility is hardly nobility of culture and intellect and creativity, the kind which is the true aristocracy of mankind.

In the third place, Nordau castigates "the political lie." What, to begin with, are the benefits that the ordinary person derives from the state to which he pays taxes and which imposes many restrictions on his liberty? He expects the state to guarantee the security of his life and his property and to help him meet certain personal needs which he can not satisfy on his own. Theoretically, this is precisely what the state accomplishes. But, in practice, the state does rather poorly. It cannot prevent wars which cause the violent deaths of vast numbers of citizens. In critical moments the citizen cannot avoid defending himself against physical violence. In such situations, how does he differ from the savage who roams the prehistoric forests?

Neither crimes of passion nor coldblooded and premeditated crimes are infrequent in our society. Nor is property secure from theft, directly or indirectly committed. Hence, the state is a wasteful kind of machinery, and what is exacted from the citizens is often squandered "in foolish, frivolous, and criminal projects" which serve the interests of small minorities. A high-salaried bureaucracy is maintained that leads an "ornamental

existence" and the administration of justice by the state is costly and sluggish. Education is not equally accessible to all.

The solution, of course, is not anarchy, the absence of all government. That "is the phantasm of confused spirits incapable of observing with precision." Reasonable criticism calls for "limited government, for an extensive simplification of government machinery, . . . (and) the restriction of the community's demands upon the citizen who alone is indispensable for the fulfillment of its tasks."

In officialdom, Nordau finds a particularly lucrative target for sarcasm and denunciation. The holder of public office is commissioned by the people, and his salary, authority, and dignity derive from them. He is always a servant, responsible to the public. But, in actuality, he regards himself as the public's lord and master, demanding subordination and the kind of respect due to the sovereign. The clerk who summons the citizen to his office and growls at the frightened soul is the historic heir of the commander and the overseer appointed by the despot of the dark centuries. "Since the official is a partake of the royal grace-of-Godness, he lays claim to some of its infallibility." To this day, the petty tyrant reigns over the little fellow, the citizen. Why is this so? Because we continue seeing in the official "something mysterious, supernatural, awe-inspiring, and terrifying."

Finally, Nordau turns to the parliamentary form of government, which, in theory, restores to the individual his sovereignty, freedom of movement, self-government and the right to elect representatives of his choice. But, in practice, this, too, is an enormous lie. The representative, once elected, votes according to his own determination. The cabinet ministers follow their own pleasure. If, once in a century, a minister is called to account for malfeasance in office, "the impeachment proceeds in a noisy and pompous fashion and terminates in a punishment ridiculously insignificant." In fact, "parliament is an institution for satisfying the vanity and the ambition of its members and for advancing their personal interests." In a way, it is a country's safety valve which prevents the nation's powerful personalities from causing great harm. Under absolutism, these become regicides or revolutionaries or street robbers or nihilists. In public life under parliamentary rule they find another outlet for their energies:

Everyone constantly fights, listens with both ears, is on the lookout, lies in ambush, seeks out scents and tries to erase his own, sleeps gun in hand and eyes half open. Here whomever one meets, is a foe. . . . One is forever vilified, chased, libelled, wounded. In general, here one lives like the Indian on the warpath in the primeval forest.

In politics, no word is heard as often as "I." Before the election, the ambitious candidate speaks only of the interests of the public, of the common good. But his real purpose is the gratification of his ego. To achieve this, he needs the support of the masses, which he secures by mouthing

the customary promises and slogans and by threatening the doubters. "Parliamentarism is the apotheosis of egoism." It is "organized human solidarity only in theory." As for the voters, the favorite candidate is usually he who makes effective speeches, has a familiar name; appeals to the public's passions, prejudices, and conventional beliefs, and propels himself forward with the greatest daring. He is the one who most frequently is chosen by a small committee of supporters or by party leaders interested in him for one reason or another. As a result, "high intelligence and nobility of spirit are defeated by skillful phrasemongering and unshakeable audacity." Minute, indeed, is the individual voter's self-determination. He hardly needs to take note of the changing parties in power. The designations "liberal" and "conservative" are little more than "masks for the real motives behind all parliamentary battles, campaigns, and changes: the passion to exercise power and egoism."

It would be trite to adduce contemporary examples showing how Nordau's critique of the "political lie" remains relevant in the twentieth century. Certainly his powers to penetrate facades were considerable. Suffice it to remind ourselves that these powers brought Herzl to him some ten years after the *Lügen* and him to Herzl. Behind the facades of liberalism and conservatism the two men saw the social and moral dynamite in the "Jewish problem" and reached the Zionist conclusion, which is chiefly why Nordau's memory is alive sixty years after his death in Paris. But the fact must not be overlooked that his social criticism, his stark realism, and his "solidarity" idealism provided the background for his Zionist fervor. And they are embedded in his "solidaritarian" Zionism which is, therefore, much deeper and richer than the "political Zionism" for which his name is often used as a synonym.

In the fourth place, Nordau vented his wrath on "the economic lie." He raised five points. First, rich and poor are growing farther apart. The rich are able to pay \$40,000 for a set of china and \$100,000 for a race horse. The poor, and they are the many, can support their very life only with the most strenuous of efforts, provided that they can find jobs. Industry practices paying employees as little as possible, selling its products for as much as possible and making the highest profits obtainable. Great wealth, therefore, is the result of the labor of others, not one's own. Contrary to Proudhon's opinion that property is theft, Nordau believed that holding property is a human right, provided that such property comes from earnings, that is, from the exchange of a certain amount of labor for a commensurate amount of goods. But enormous fortunes are the outgrowth of "robbery committed against those who labor." Second, the blessings of education, poetry, art, can generally be enjoyed only by the rich. But "we must learn to view the cultivated mind as in itself an adequate reward for the effort to attain it." Hence, society should make education accessible to all who are capable of benefitting from it. This requires, in addition to free schooling, "the entire material support of

studying youth." Nor must manual labor remain synonymous with lack of education, for the well-educated, being the majority, would earn their livelihood by direct production of articles for the market.

Third, production should be commensurate with reasonable consumption, not with skyrocketing profits: "The great economic interest of mankind is not to produce goods for which a price can be gotten. Rather, it is first of all to satisfy real organic needs through labor." Sooner or later it will be generally recognized that "exaggerated, onesided industrialism is a mass-suicide of mankind and that all that economists adduce in its favor is a lie and a fraud." Leisure needs to be increased. The factory worker must not be chained to the machine ten, twelve, even fourteen hours a day. Fourth, "communism, as all schools of socialism understand and preach it, is the silly outgrowth of a phantasy which indulges in blue reveries without regard to universal reality and human nature." Real community of property has never existed in the world. Nor is it possible to make a fair and equitable judgment as to the social value of a man's labor. Fifth, the right to inheritance, like the right to primogeniture, should be abolished. No one should be relieved from the necessity of earning a living. Hence, "all land, with all the buildings, factories, transportation, installations etc. that are on it, must become the unalienable property of the commonwealth and in its entirety revert to it as each generation comes to a close." Title to these properties should be available for one lifetime against payment to the government of an appropriate rental fee. The beneficiaries of the system would be public education, agriculture, employment opportunities, provisions for the aged.

In the eulogy delivered three weeks after Nordau's death in 1923, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland cited the concluding passage of the "economic lie." "As I read it now," he told his congregation, "I know that the man spoke in 1883 as a prophet speaks." Nordau wrote:

Great catastrophes loom in the field of economics, and it will not be possible to ignore them much longer. . . . The increasing disinheritance of the masses by their deprivation of land and by the increasing accumulation of property in the hands of the few will make the economic wrongs more and more intolerable. . . . Hunger is one of the few elementary forces which neither threats nor persuasion can permanently control. Hence it is the power which will probably raze the present structure of society to the ground, in spite of its foundations of superstition and selfishness — a task beyond the power of philosophy alone.

Today, the title of Nordau's chapter, "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," is as ominous as ever in the social and economic field. Neither the communist world nor the West has solved the problem, and "solidaritarian" economics remain to be worked out in the twenty-first century.

Lastly, Nordau attacked the "matrimonial lie." Marriage, he believed, "should be the victory of altruism, but it is the victory of egotism." Altogether too often, considerations of economic advantage and of social

prestige, rather than love, obtrude. As a result, "the conventional marriage (that is, nine out of ten which are entered into among the civilized peoples of Europe) is . . . a deeply immoral relation, one which is fraught with fateful consequences for the future of society." The economic organization of our civilization is to blame. Its basis is egotism and fails to look after the concerns of the unborn generations. But also blameworthy is the prevailing conception of morality, which regards sex as indecent and considers ignorance of it as healthful. It insists on monogamy, "until death us do part." But, Nordau was convinced, "monogamy is not the natural condition of mankind." It is, rather, the outcome of the economic organization of society which is not based on "economic solidarity." Children would starve if left to mothers whose economic situation is weak. The father must, therefore, be compelled to assume that responsibility. He must be chained to the woman whom he wishes to make a mother, and chained for life. But will love last as long as life, even if it was present in the beginning? Are our feelings immutable? Nordau answered that, in fact, perhaps only one couple in ten thousand retain their love throughout life. "It may sound objectionable but I must say it anyway: It is even possible to love several individuals at the same time and to do so with equal tenderness. It need not be a lie if each is assured of our passion." The fact is that "unconditional fidelity is not a trait of human nature." To exact such loyalty, to seek complete possession of another person for all time, is a form of egotism. Jealousy, in fact, is quite possible without love which restrains egotism.

Nordau conceded the difficulties standing in the way of a satisfactory solution to the problem of fidelity and "the natural duration of love." In practice, man lives in a state of polygamy even in civilized countries. Neither men nor women strictly observe the rules of monogamy, but, for a variety of reasons, society prefers infidelity to divorce. Nordau suggested that instead of frowning on those who choose to separate, society should respect them "as courageous and truthful people" willing to break the form which has become devoid of meaning for them. In addition, the woman should be protected for life from physical want and her children should be supported and educated by the community. This would make women free to choose, rather than to sell themselves. When material considerations lose their importance, a man will compete for a woman's favor with his personality, not his social position and property. Then matrimony will function as truth rather than as lie.

Among the "lesser lies," Nordau deals at some length with the notion that the press represents public opinion or the conscience of the human race. Actually, the press does nothing of the kind. Journalists usually offer their private views and biases as mankind's own truth. In order to be representative, newspaper men should be elected. Only when holding a public mandate can they justly claim to speak the public's mind. A second "lesser lie" is the duel. Like war, it is based on the idea that might makes

right. It is, therefore, "a temporary suspension of civilization and a return to primitivism."

The Conventional Lies of Civilized Mankind ends with the hope that superstition, egotism, despotism, collective and individual mendacity, the need to lead double lives and to maintain split minds, will give way to scientifically valid knowledge and to harmonious personalities. The author hoped that the current "period of demolition," as he called it, would be replaced by enlightened "solidarity of mankind" and its "new, immeasurably deeper, loftier, and more natural morality." This morality commands: "Do everything possible which promotes the wellbeing of mankind; avoid everything that causes mankind damage or pain." Why choose the higher morality? "Because the species wants to live." What is the reward and the punishment? "Flourishing mankind is your paradise; stunted mankind is your hell." This is what the religions have drawn from "the eternal basin of human affairs," but they have concealed its core with all sorts of covers.

In a word, Nordau looked forward to "solidarity," the regime of altruism, of self-government, of education and bread for all, of warfare in the milder form of peaceful competition. Such was his image of "a civilization of truth, of love of fellow-man, of the cheerful spirit, of humanity not as abstraction but as tangible fact."

Had he written in 1983 instead of 1883, Nordau would have had to consider different sets of facts. The conditions leading to the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the "little wars" in many parts of the world, including Korea, Vietnam, Israel's wars, the Iran-Iraq war, the Falklands war, would have made his critique of "the political lie" more sardonic, his verbal assaults more deadly. The resurgence of mysticism and, in its wake, the weakening of faith in man's mind and in love would have enraged him even more than what he took for his target in "the religious lie." The tragedy of Jonestown, the outrage of Khomeini medievalism, the new popularity of irrationality, the "drug culture" and "counter-culture," would have been subjected to wrathful denunciation. He would have had to include a chapter on "the racial lie" whose ultimate perniciousness was not visible in 1883, decades before the unconscionable massacre of innocent Armenians and before genocidal-Judaeocidal nazism. He would most likely have avoided his nonsensical objection to women's emancipation and equality, on the indefensible grounds of woman's physical weakness. On the issue of monogamy, he would have known that the Soviet Union found it necessary to retreat from practices in the early years after the revolution which reduced conventional marriages to simple registration that could be ended by an equally unceremonial signing of a form in a municipal office. He would have had to pay attention to experimentation with open living-together in *kibbuzim* which did not become the prevailing mode of relations between men and women in either the pre-State *yishuv* nor in the State of Israel. On the other hand, the growing numbers

of American couples who live together without a marriage ceremony and dissolve their relationship at will would tend to strengthen his doubts about monogamy. But it is also possible that he might have seen in this development a form of that unhealthy, irresponsible individualism and egotism-à-deux which is not compatible with authentic "human solidarity." His admiration for Proverbs 5 (see above) indicates that thirty-seven years after the *Lügen* he thought differently about marriage, at least in the Jewish tradition which permits divorce and shows practical concern for women and children.

Nordau's treatment of "the economic lie" would have gained from a close study of communist literature and practice and of the varieties of anti-communist socialism, notably the social democracies. In particular, because of current interest in the issue, he would probably have linked the idea that land, factories etc., should revert to the commonwealth, according to the Bible's revolutionary Jubilee principle. Nordau himself corrected this omission in the *Lügen* when he addressed a message to the American Zionist leader, Louis Lipsky in, December, 1919. Nordau urged that the whole territory of Palestine ought to become the eternal property of the Jewish people and that distribution to individuals be made "according to our wonderful Mosaic law concerning the Sabbatical and the Jubilee Year." The modernization of this law, he noted, had already been attempted in theory by Henry George in North America and in practice by Bernardino Rivadavia in Argentina. What Nordau did not note is the fact that the idea of the abolition of the right of inheritance was already recommended by Karl Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and again by Mikhail Bakunin in his *Revolutionary Catechism* of 1866.

In 1983, Nordau would have had to be cognizant of the fact that religion need not be identified with the supernatural and rejected along with it. Nor would he have been able to avoid reckoning with the scientific study of biblical literature which does no harm to reverence for the Bible as created by the genius of the Jewish people.

Also, in 1983, he would have had to expose "the totalitarian lie" of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung; the fanatical politics of Asad, Qaddafi, Arafat; the brutalitarian regimes in Latin America and in "the Arab World"; the unspeakable worldwide terror. Lastly, it is likely that he would have written a chapter on "the Lie of 'Liberation Movements.'"

One need not be a Nordau apologist to recognize that much in the *Lügen* survives the one hundred years since its first publication, and that the conventional lies of the twentieth century need to be exposed with a Nordauesque fearlessness and fervor. Would he have seen signs of a new truth emerging in a deceitful world? The continued existence of American democracy, the enormous strides of late-twentieth-century science and its self-corrective ethos, and the survival of the Jewish people and the State of Israel would have reinforced his hope that the outlook for "human solidarity" among men and nations was not altogether bleak.

On the Art of Criticism

ABRAHAM I. KOOK

Translated by Ben Zion Bokser

EVERY BOOK, BY ITSELF, REVEALS ONLY a limited and partial aspect of feeling and thought. One can know its true value only by finding its link with the larger theme.

When the contribution of one important volume is joined with another important volume which seems in opposition to it, then is the theme revealed in its greater fullness. It is only when these opposing elements are brought together that we reach completeness. One complements the other.

We must always bear this principle in mind when we discuss our books which deal with the inner life. We shall see Judaism in its fullness when we shall regard every book as one of the building-blocks of a great palace, that all join together to form one huge and complete edifice. Although Judaism has many diverse aspects, it is in truth one entity. "These and also those are the words of the living God" (*Ber.* 63b). It is only then that the influence of those books will bestow their great blessing.

But it takes talent to achieve this unification and harmonization. It takes spiritual discipline and, particularly, hard work and a tranquil mind, which develop through regular and habituated good training, in the love of knowledge, the love of the Jewish people, the love of Torah and the love of God.

In general, in the order of our studies, broad, comprehensive knowledge must come before the work of innovating originality. "A person should first study Torah, and then engage in speculation" (*Ber.* 63b). Especially when it comes to harmonizing clashes resulting from opposition and criticism, this can be undertaken only after attaining profound and clear knowledge, which can be acquired with great patience and much labor. "Keep silent (*hasket*), and hear, O Israel" (*Deut.* 27:9). By a play on the word *hasket*, the rabbis coined the aphorism: "Listen (*has*) and then analyze (*katet*)" (*Ber.* 63b). But even great knowledge in itself will not be sufficient, if it is not also accompanied with the other ethical virtues, without which it is impossible that the truth be disclosed.

All these qualities cannot be found by those who come to the spiritual banquet hall of the Torah like wayfarers, wayfarers who do not dress appropriately when they enter, because this spiritual, honored and holy banquet hall is regarded by them as some inn that every crude person can

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enter, with dirt on his shoes, and the stain on his garment, and all of life's filth on his body and soul.

Thus, the failure to set a fixed discipline of study and preparation in the spiritual dimension of the Torah has brought about a fearful crisis! The limited and only occasional attention to this pursuit has resulted in the fact that these diverse subjects are not joined to each other, and there is no relationship between them, which is essential for a comprehensive spiritual outlook. The thoughts proceed, alone, and straying. Each person is influenced by some solitary aspect of a particular book, or, to be more exact, by parts of a particular book, while the book itself loses its lustre with the decline of its ideas and the rejection of its thinking when it enters the realm of the spiritual. "One who says, 'This tradition is beautiful and that is not beautiful,' concerning him does the verse say, 'He who associates with harlots wastes his substance' (Prov. 29:3) — he wastes the substance of the Torah" (*Erubin* 64a). This has happened in our time, in the fullest sense of the term, in regard to the spiritual dimension of the Torah.

And those who are accustomed to the ways of religion, of the Torah and the commandments, do they know how to enjoy and to spread enjoyment from the splendor of this banquet hall? From among them should have come those worthy to be the intimates of this chamber. But they look at it with excessive fear, not like intimates of the chamber who are familiar with its significance, but like a watchman of the courtyard, who enjoys the exterior of the chamber, without it ever occurring to him that it is in order for him to go inside. Thus, the entrance to the chamber is left to those presumptuous ones who enter with all the filth and ignorance, their defilements and their arrogance. And they are the ones who show our people, as it were, the light of Judaism!

Who can speak to such arrogant people concerning the enhancement of one outlook through another, concerning the higher embrace of all conceptions of Judaism, how they harmonize, and that it is precisely from all the shepherds together that will go forth Torah and enlightenment?

They know, for example, that Maimonides speaks in praise of reason and perception, while Rabbi Judah Ha-Levi spoke in praise of feeling and poetry, and therefore they see this as a case where "two texts contradict each other" (*Mekhilta* on *Ex.*, *Jethro*). They see no alternative but to downgrade one and extol the other, obviously with the trivial praises with which these petty people can praise. In truth, their praise is full of embarrassment and insult, and its benefit is minimal.

Such criticism is of no help to understand the profound thoughts of those *zaddikim*. It only dims the splendor of their light. If, for example, one conception is offered to us in the *Guide to the Perplexed* (by Maimonides) and another in the *Kuzari* (by Rabbi Judah Ha-Levi), each is, indeed, a complete and luminous world, when taken by itself. But it is possible to

understand their full greatness only “when they receive from each other” (*Targum*, Isa. 6:3), and are included in a comprehensive whole. This is true not only of those two great luminaries, but of all the great and lesser teachers of light, those who focus on the mystical. It is necessary that they shine together like the brightness in the sky over the whole embrace of Judaism. Only then will we know their light. Only then will we be able, with greatness of spirit, to add what it is within our power to add, on the basis of our perspective and the level of our culture. Then will our contribution in the work of literature serve to enhance the great edifice built by our prophets and our scholars throughout the generations.

Hosea

GENE CRUMLEY

the One
who heals also
wounds

despite contrary claims that
one who wounds
could never heal
and one who heals
would never wound

nevertheless

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Touch, Sight and Hearing in Jewish Sexuality

MONFORD HARRIS

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE IS HIGHLY VALUED IN Judaism, the one “higher” religion that depends on a particular people in history. Throughout Scripture, Talmud, rabbinic commentaries and kabbalistic writings there are references to the sexual relationship. In the middle ages there appeared a kind of sex manual, called *Iggeret HaKodesh*,¹ *Epistle on Holiness*. Written by an anonymous kabbalist, it deals with specific aspects of sexual intercourse and presents a mystical interpretation of sexuality.

The *Epistle* defends intercourse against those who consider it “ugly and loathsome.” Intercourse, it maintains, is called “knowing” when conducted properly. In referring to this “knowing,” the *Epistle* does not quote the biblical text, “Adam knew Eve his wife (Genesis 4:1),” since the goal of the *Epistle* is the holy life and the procreation of pious sons, whereas Adam and Eve’s “knowing” produced Cain, the first murderer. It is the “knowing” of Elkanah and Hannah that produced the pious Samuel that is referred to as the “true knowing” (I *Samuel*, 1:19).

This “true knowing” is defended against its denigration by Maimonides who, influenced by Aristotle, held that sight was the noblest sense, whereas touch was disgraceful, being the most physical and, therefore, the most animal-like of the senses. This denigration of touch led to the same attitude towards the sexual organs and intercourse. But, says the *Epistle*, God’s creation is good and the human organs are good unless they are misused.

An analysis of the two senses, the optic and the tactile, will give us an understanding of a Jewish approach to sexuality.

Sight travels over a longer distance than do the other senses. Furthermore, a philosopher declares that objectivity “emerges preeminently from sight,”² the sense of the “passive observer par excellence.”³ This passive objectivity of sight is

the freest and at the same time the least “realistic” of the senses. Reality is

1. Dr. Seymour Cohen has published a critical edition of the work, together with an English translation entitled *The Holy Letter* (New York, 1966). We quote from this edition but have somewhat changed the translations.

2. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (New York, 1966), p. 144.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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primarily evidenced in resistance which is an ingredient in touch experience. For physical contact is more than geometrical contiguity: it involves impact . . . Touch is the sense in which the original encounter with reality as reality takes place.⁴

In the Jewish tradition of sexuality, sight is devalued. Sexual intercourse, according to the tradition, should take place in the dark. This is commanded explicitly or implicitly in all of the texts. It is, for example, only when Abraham and Sarah go to Egypt and he fears for his life that he *sees* that she is beautiful (Genesis 12:11). It is then that he achieves distance, seeing her as others will see her.

To understand this devaluation of sight we turn to a twentieth century thinker. In analyzing the voyeur, Erwin Straus explains that

anyone who draws his sexual gratification from looking at another, lives continuously at a distance . . . [T]he voyeur . . . remains alone without a partner . . . In viewing, there is a transition from the I-thou encounter, i.e., mutual participation . . . to the subject-object relationship proper. All looking and being looked at is a lapse from immediate communication . . . Thus the voyeur does not participate in reality and in any direct sense but only by way of objectifications, i.e., reflected knowledge.⁵

The Jewish tradition rejects sight since its conception of knowing is not that of objectification or reflective knowledge. Its "knowing" is personal, intimate, existential knowledge. This is why, also, the Jewish sources stress modesty in connection with sexuality. Darkness covers nakedness and thereby avoids shame. The author of the *Epistle*, like all Jewish authors of statements on modesty, knew the biblical text that Adam and Eve were not aware of their nakedness until their eyes were opened. Then they were ashamed and they made garments for themselves (Genesis 3:7).

We can understand the tradition connecting shame with nakedness when we understand the voyeur. He

reveals in his objectifying attitude and in his furtive entry into the Other's most intimate experience, the antinomy of two modes of being — the public mode and that of immediate being. (While everyone belongs to the public sphere, having name, rôle, status, etc.), the intimate person is always initially concealed by his public figure. It is possible to participate in the public figure with a non-committal, one way kind of general interest . . . the intimate person [however] opens and reveals himself . . . only in mutual and immediate participation.⁶

Shame, therefore, "divides what is immediately becoming from the finished outcome and protects whatever is becoming from violation by the completed." Shame also "safeguards against the presence of the non-participating stranger, [the] . . . observer [who] tends to introduce some objectification into every immediate relationship."⁷

4. Ibid., p. 148.

5. Erwin Straus, *Phenomenological Psychology* (New York, 1966), p. 219.

6. Ibid., p. 220.

7. Ibid., p. 221.

That is why sight is devalued in the Jewish approach. It makes for objectification. Touch, on the other hand, makes for closeness and, therefore, intimacy. "In touch, subject and object are already doing something to each other in the very act of which the object becomes a phenomenal presence."⁸ One can translate this philosophical analysis into biblical terms: "Any kind of bodily touch must strengthen the covenant . . . The covenant is confirmed by the shake of the hand . . . and still more by the intimate touch through the kiss."⁹

As touch is affirmed by the *Epistle*, so is hearing. According to the *Epistle* the husband should cause his wife

to rejoice, prepare her and refresh her with words that delight the heart . . . words that draw out her heart, calm her and make her happy . . . He should talk to her . . . speak to her words that bring her into a state of relationship and love, that attract her to piety, *hasidut*, and modesty. He should tell her [also] about the ways of pious women [of the past].¹⁰

Implicitly rejecting the optic sense, the noblest sense of the philosophers and, curiously, the one used by the voyeur, the *Epistle* opts for the tactile and auditory senses. These two share something;

their primary objects, the qualities sensed, have process character and thus are essentially time entities [which] "give" only dynamic and never static reality . . . Sound immediately discloses . . . not an object but a dynamical event at the locus of the object.¹¹ (Furthermore), in touch subject and object are doing something to each other.¹²

According to Jewish tradition, the time for sexual relationship is Friday night. The Mishnah had stated, in what might be termed a sociology of sexual intercourse, that the time for intercourse varied according to the husband's occupation.¹³ Only the Gemara refers to the sage's time.¹⁴ Questions have been raised about the Mishnah's silence. We suggest that the Mishnah's sociology of intercourse deals with the husband's *job* and, therefore, does not refer to the sage. "Sage" is not a job classification. The sage is the authentic Jew; his way is the way for every Jew.

Moderns, tempted into platonizing the Sabbath, have interpreted it as "freeing one from the chains of time,"¹⁵ but this is not the traditional understanding of Sabbath. Sabbath celebrates creation, which includes time. Furthermore, Sabbath celebrates the Exodus from Egypt, an event in time. Because of these two events, Sabbath is the time for the sexual relationship, which is also an event in time.

8. Jonas, *Op. cit.*, p. 146.

9. J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London, 1947), Vol. II, p. 303.

10. Cohen, *The Holy Letter*, p. 141. Translation modified by me.

11. Jonas, *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

13. Tractate, *Ketubot*, p. 61b.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 62b.

15. Eric Fromm, *The Forgotten Language* (New York, 1957), p. 245.

God, of course, did not procreate the world, as is the case in many pagan religions, but spoke it, called it into existence. Although, in creating the human, God says, "Let us make the Adam" (Genesis 1:26), He does not call him, but He does fashion Man into existence. Rashi, mindful of Psalm 139:5, "Thou hast laid Thy hand upon me," and aware of *Midrash Psalms* on this verse, which says that "Adam was created by God's two hands," comments that "Adam was created by (God's) hands."¹⁶ God *sees*, after each act of creation, that what he has made is good because sight is the distance sense and Genesis stresses distance, i.e., separation or distinction, between Him and creation. Seeing, however, is not referred to after the creation of the *Adam*. God speaks to the man-woman and blesses them. The auditory means intimacy. Indeed, He blesses the other creatures, too. In creation, then, there is both hearing and touch, the primary senses in sexual relationships that are conducted on Sabbath.

Sabbath is also connected with the Exodus from Egypt, as is explicit in Deuteronomy's version of the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5:15) and, generally, in the Sabbath traditional liturgy. Since this is so, and since Sabbath is the time for sexual relationship, that relationship is implicitly connected with the Exodus. How is this possible?

First of all, even non-human reproduction, i.e., agricultural production, is related to the Exodus. The Israelite farmer's liturgical prayer of thanksgiving recited when the first fruits are brought to the sanctuary (Deut. 26:11) has, as its theme, not fertility but the Exodus. Furthermore, human procreation is also connected with the Exodus. The Exodus takes place because God remembers His covenant with the patriarchs and, therefore, redeems the Children of Israel (Exodus 2:23-24). The Exodus from Egypt always stresses progeny. "When your son asks of you tomorrow" (Exodus 13:14; Deuteronomy, 6:20) is stated only in connection with the celebration of the Exodus. Significantly, one is *me'saper*, one tells about the Exodus at the Passover seder; the heavens which God created *me'saperim* (declare) the glory of God; and a husband is *me'saper* (is intimate) with his wife.

Sexuality is always connected with the historical existence of the Jewish people. Even the *Epistle on Holiness*, despite its metaphysical, non-historical orientation, is explicitly aware of the realm of history. Its first chapter refers to the People of Israel as unique among the nations, and it quotes Isaiah's statement, "The people which I (God) formed for myself" (43:21), the verb "formed" being generally used for the conception of children. And among the intimate words of husband and wife are the ways of the pious women in Jewish historic existence about whom the husband tells his wife.

Since touch and hearing make for intimacy, and darkness avoids the shame, which would result from the intrusion of objectivity, it is noteworthy

16. Rashi on Genesis, 1:29.

thy that the *Epistle* and, indeed, the whole rabbinic tradition, assumes the presence of another Being in this intimate situation: the Shekhinah, God's presence. Affirming the talmudic statement, "When husband and wife are worthy the Shekhinah abides with them; if they are not worthy, fire consumes them,"¹⁷ the tradition assumes that God is present with husband and wife. If God is present would this not destroy the intimacy and participatory relationship by virtue of the intrusion of the non-participatory stranger?

God, however, is not the voyeur. The long enduring theme in all of Jewish experience is that God

"is in between" the parties of the covenant. Through the covenant, the two parties create something outside and higher than themselves, and its holiness appears from the fact that the divine power takes part in it and watches over it.¹⁸

Now Sabbath is a sign of the covenant, is covenantal time, the time when the Presence is particularly sensed. As covenantal time and, therefore, time for sexual relationships, it is the time when God is present in covenantal relationships.

God's presence at the time of sexual relationship is not merely a charming poetic fiction; it deserves serious consideration. The rabbinic observation that God is engaged in joining mates, "a task as difficult as sundering the Reed Sea"¹⁹ is important. It calls to our attention the fact that uniting mates is as hard to accomplish as disjoining natural elements. It also associates marriage with the Exodus. Furthermore, since rabbinic statements are frequently multi-level, it says that just as sundering the Reed Sea is the great miracle of the Exodus, match-making is the great miracle in the every-day human world.

The sociologist, Georg Simmel, has translated this rabbinic observation into abstract modern terms:

The fact that two fundamentally different beings, man and woman, form such a close union; that the egoism of each is so thoroughly suspended, not only in favor of the other, but also in favor of the general relationship, including the interests and the honor of the family and, above all, the children — this is really a *miraculous fact* (our emphasis).²⁰

(Simmel reflects on this "miraculous fact.") It (the union) is grounded in bases of the ego which rationalistically are inexplicable and which lie beyond its consciousness. It is also expressed in the distinction between the unit and its elements. That each of them feels the relation to be something with its own life-forces merely indicates that it is incommensurable with the personal, self contained ego . . .²¹ (His conclusion is that) it is sociologically

17. Tractate *Sotah*, p. 17a. Soncino translation modified.

18. Pedersen, *Op. cit.*, p. 449.

19. Tractate *Sotah*, p. 2a (my translation).

20. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated and edited by K.H. Wolff (New York, 1950), p. 130.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

very significant that isolated elements are unified by their common relation to a phenomenon which lies outside of them.²²

For the Jewish tradition, that which unites these isolated elements is God.

Simmel's analysis of the "third person" in marriage is highly suggestive for our understanding of the Jewish tradition.

No couple has by itself invented the form of marriage . . . If we look at the history of marriage we are struck . . . by the important, always traditional role that is played by third persons during courtship, in negotiations regarding dowry, and in the wedding ceremonies proper . . . This most personal relation of all is taken over and directed by entirely super-personal, historical-social authority . . . It [embodies] . . . an objective form, . . . a super-personal unit . . . Each of the two spouses . . . confronted by only the other . . . also feels . . . as the mere bearer of a super-individual structure . . . independent of him, although he is an organic part of it.²³

Simmel, as sociologist, has no need for God in his analysis, but his analysis of the super-personal in marriage is highly suggestive for an understanding of the Jewish view. He states that:

Marriage is something super-personal . . . valuable and sacred in itself . . . beyond whatever unsacredness each of its elements may possess . . . For the consciousness of each of them, their relationship may thus become crystallized as an entity outside of them . . . and toward which . . . [each] has obligations from which . . . [each] receives good or fateful gifts, as if from some objective being.²⁴

Simmel's super-personal is, of course, the human collectivity. For the Jewish tradition, the super-personal is God.

Characteristic of Jewish sexuality is what moderns call a "healthy naturalism." One must be wary, however, of this term, for it means an autonomous life freed from the values imposed by religion.

Jewish sexuality is a theonomous humanism that is complex. It is embodied in a talmudic text:

Rabbi Johanan b. Dahabi said, "the ministering angels told me" that children were born deformed because their parents had done unacceptable things during intercourse. But another sage said, "That is the view of Rabbi Johanan b. Dahabi; [however, the rabbis said] that the halakhah is not according to Rabbi Johanan b. Dahabi, but a man may do whatever he pleases with his wife [during intercourse]."²⁵

One teacher interprets "ministering angels" as "learned sages" because the views of angels could not have been rejected since "the angels know more about formation of the fetus than we do."²⁶ This explanation does not make sense for it would mean that the rabbis, in rejecting Rabbi Johanan's report were rejecting their own words. So, against the angel's state-

22. Ibid., p. 145.

23. Ibid., p. 130.

24. Ibid., p. 129.

25. Tractate, *Nedarim*, pp. 20a-b. Soncino translation.

26. Ibid., 20b.

ments about sexual relationships, the halakhah is that all forms of sexual relationship with one's mate are permissible. While angels may know some things about reproduction, it is implied that they do not know about human relationships; or, as is frequently stated, the Torah was not given to angels.

According to an old midrash, God considered the mirrors used by Jewish women so precious that they were to be used in the building of the desert sanctuary. In Egypt, when these women's

husbands were tired through the crushing labor, [the women] would bring them food and drink and induce them to eat. Then they would take the mirrors; and each gazed at herself in her mirror together with her husband, winning him with words, "See, I am handsomer than you." Thus, they stimulated their husband's desire; they had sexual intercourse, conceived and gave birth.²⁷

In this midrash, sight plays a role but only that of stimulating energized husbands. Furthermore, even when the mirrors were used, words had to be spoken by the women. Of itself, sight is not important; it needs words which lead to touch. Moses, according to the midrash, originally rejected the mirrors, since they had been used "for the evil (i.e., the sexual impulse)." He finally accepted them, however, because God valued them since they served to reproduce "such a large population" and preserve the Jewish people from extinction.

Important in this midrash is the connection of sexuality with the Exodus. This is the enduring theme of sexuality in Jewish tradition. Sabbath is covenantal time and, therefore, the time for sexual relationship, which is a covenantal act between mates that maintains the life of the covenantal community. It is attended to by the covenantal God Whose Presence is in between the members of the Covenant.

27. Rashi on Exodus 38:8. Translation by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silberman (London, 1930), modified.

The Religious Art of Cynthia Ozick

LOUIS HARAP

ONE OF THE CHANGES IN POSTWAR AMERICAN literature has been the turn to religion of one sort or other by some Jewish writers. Among those who have espoused Judaism have been Chaim Potok, Arthur A. Cohen and, perhaps the most brilliant among them, Cynthia Ozick. In 1972 she received the Jewish Book Council award for *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (1971), but her books have sold only modestly. She is also a prolific writer of essays and reviews; indeed, her essays often exhibit an unusual fusion of imagination and intellect, and sometimes imagination predominates. It is apparent from her writing that she has independently cultivated her knowledge of religious Jewish learning and culture. As she says in occasional references to herself as an "autodidact," she achieved Jewish learning by personal efforts rather than from formal instruction. Nonetheless, among contemporary secular Jewish writers she is one of the best informed on Jewish history and learning. What she has said about Yiddish literature also applies to her own viewpoint: "*Mamaloshen* doesn't produce *Wastelands*. No alienation, no nihilism, no dadaism."¹ Like Bellow, she has swerved from the post-World War II adoption of the alienation theme and instead she is a passionate exponent of a literature in English which aims to be Jewish in its essence.

This course was by no means clear in her first book, *Trust* (1966), a 568 page novel in the Jamesian manner, in which she explored various forms of betrayal of one person by another. Her virtuoso command of English is perhaps too apparent in this overwritten story which conveys a sense that the author revels in her virtuosity. The narrator is a non-Jewish young woman, and the only important Jewish character is Enoch Vand (né Adam Gruenhorn), her stepfather, married to her wealthy mother Allegra. A former Marxist, Enoch has become, by the time of World War II, an intense anti-Communist and is a State Department official. One of the stirring passages in the novel tells of Enoch's official postwar project of overseeing the identification and burial of the Jewish dead in Europe.

While writing this novel, which she dates from 1957 to 1963, Ozick was an esthete. In her biography in *Contemporary Writers*, vols. 17-18

1. Cynthia Ozick, "Envy; or, Yiddish in America," *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (New York, 1971), p. 82.

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(1966), she responded to the questions on both her “politics” and “religion” as “literature.” In her programmatic essay, “America: Toward Yavneh” (1970), she wrote candidly, “Until very recently, my whole life was given over to the religion of Art . . . I had no other aspiration, no other commitment, no other creed.”² She had begun the book, she says, “for the Gentiles,” but by the time she was ending it, she “finished” it for the Jews. This becomes evident on the last page. Vand has been nominated ambassador to a small country, but McCarthyite influences have put his confirmation in doubt by exposing the radical activities of his wife, Allegra. Nevertheless, he is confirmed. However, two hours later, a radical revolution takes place in the country to which he has been assigned and he becomes the shortest-tenured ambassador in history. This development ends the process of disillusionment that he has been undergoing. He then retires into inactivity for a few months, only to emerge with the plan of returning to Jewishness. He reads through the King James version of the Bible, he takes lessons in Hebrew from a Holocaust survivor, and then reads the Bible through in Hebrew. After finishing, he studies the *Ethics of the Fathers* and then goes through the whole Talmud. We may surmise that this procedure essentially describes the process undergone by the author herself.³

By the time she had finished *Trust*, she was weary of its “mandarin” style and aspirations to “High Art” — “every paragraph a poem.” Her subsequent fiction indicates the drastic change in strategy — to the short story and the novella — after turning for inspiration, “in relief,” to the short stories of Frank O’Connor. By 1970 she had worked out her conception of the Jewish perspective in literature, and took the occasion of her participation in the Eighth Annual American-Israel Dialogue in Jerusalem to present it in her elaborate paper, referred to above, “America: Toward Yavneh.” Her thesis runs counter to the Zionist tenet that Israel today must be the cultural center of all world Jewry. The Diaspora, she holds, can be like a “Jerusalem Displaced,” like the cultural renewal at Yavneh after the destruction of the Temple. Similarly, she holds, “America shall, for a while, become Yavneh” until Israel “consolidates itself against savagery.” Equally shocking to her Israeli audience was her assertion that the language of this Yavneh would be a Judaized English, what she calls the “New Yiddish,” just as the original Yiddish was an adaptation of a gentile tongue. Later, she was even to assert that English is “my passion, my blood, my life . . . my everything.” However, she admits to being “cramped” by it sometimes because, being a “Christian language,” it is inadequate for words to encompass “the oceanic amplitudes of the Jewish Idea,” as, for instance, the inadequacy of any English term for

2. Cynthia Ozick, “America: Toward Yavneh,” 8th Annual American Israel Dialogue, *Congress bi-Weekly*, Vol. 38, Nos. 2-3 (Feb. 26, 1977): 47.

3. Cynthia Ozick, *Trust* (New York, 1966) p. 567.

"Torah." But these are after-thoughts; basically, she believes in the "New Yiddish" which is an English sharply focused on Jewish concerns and immersed in the tradition. Further, she holds that such an English must be "liturgical," by which she means that it must be concerned with value and judgment in contrast to esthetic expression. "Liturgical" writing is animated by "moral imagination," and is a "communal voice, the echo of the Lord of History." She goes so far as to maintain that such language cannot be "secular," for if it is, it is no longer Jewish. In other words, only that writing is Jewish which is rooted in the substance of the Jewish traditions which have been predominantly religious. It is, however, unclear whether Ozick means that the Jew as writer must actually believe in the God of Moses or only subscribe to the course of life prescribed by Judaism.

In 1972, in her speech accepting the Jewish Book Council Award for *The Pagan Rabbi*, she held that the Jew must follow history, not nature. By this she means adherence to Jewish historical religious practice rather than a pagan naturalism.

One need not believe in God — in a sense one *should* not — in order to see that — what is holy is not natural and what is natural is not holy. The God of the Jews must not be conceived of as belonging to nature.

Whether the Jewish mode of life as so conceived loses its validity entirely or in part without the affirmation of belief in God is a problem, but Ozick seems to show no explicit awareness of it as such. She is concerned only that, for Jewish writing to be "liturgical," it must have the moral content traditional to Judaism, and not necessarily be grounded in the existence of God, as she noted in an essay, "Holiness and its Discontents."⁴ For instance, she interprets the Mosaic commandment against idolatry to mean the rejection not only of the worship of material objects or images, but also of the pursuit of anything for its own sake apart from its moral or religious status. Thus, literature enjoyed for its own sake as an esthetic object is "idolatry."

Storytelling (Ozick has written,) . . . is a kind of magic act . . . The story-making faculty itself can be a corridor to the corruption and abominations of idol-worship, of the adoration of the magical event.⁵

Can one, therefore, be a storyteller and remain a Jew?

It should be apparent that her conception of the "Jew" is drastically constricted, that it is limited to one who practices conformity with the traditional beliefs and regulations set forth in Torah. In actuality, however, one gathers — though she is not explicit at this point — that the "Jew" may exercise judgment on which aspects of *halakhah* he observes. Indeed, it would not even be necessary for the Jew to *believe* in God. He must only

4. Cynthia Ozick, "Holiness and its Discontents," *Jewish Book Annual*, Vol. 30 (1972-73), p. 10.

5. Cynthia Ozick, "Preface," *Bloodshed and Three Novellas* (New York, 1976), p. 11.

perpetuate the spirit of the tradition. Here one gets lost. Ozick has declared that Bellow's *Sammler's Planet* is "written wholly in New Yiddish." Yet one wonders if Bellow would fit into her highly restrictive definition of a Jew. On the other hand, Ozick, in the same place, names Hortense Calisher's *The New Yorkers* as a "liturgical" novel "written in the glimmering beginnings of New Yiddish." Unfortunately, however, we have her review of this novel written about one year earlier. A "pointless" reading, she asserted at that time, would be to read this book as "a portrait of Jewish assimilation-patterns in America." Instead, she characterized it as "a verbal wheel: pre-eminently about itself; continuously referring to itself." At the outset of her review she called it an "anti-novel," one of the recent "new" novels which "belongs with Nabokov's."⁶ Yet, in the "Yavneh" article, she criticizes the "new novel," one which is "about itself," whose "practitioners are by and large not Jews," as "a poem without a history — which is to say an idol."⁷ Ozick has expelled idolatry from Jewish precincts. So where are we? One is forced to the conclusion that her speculative imagination, her verbal virtuosity and her rhetorical powers sometimes carry her away.

One of the most serious consequences of her passionate Jewish identification with tradition is the absence in her writing, whether essayistic or creative, of a world in crisis, except as it bears on the danger of anti-Semitism, or what she stigmatizes as being anti-Israel, or a renewal of the Holocaust. The possibility of world destruction from nuclear action seems not to exist for her. Her apprehensions about the future are limited to the Jewish one. In "Diaspora," she writes, her determination is to read and write as urgently as she can — "before the American pogrom! How much time is there left? The rest of my life? One generation? Two?" Concern about Jews in the Diaspora is surely a vital matter, but Jews are just as susceptible as their non-Jewish fellow citizens to the effect of general social events, to repression or enslavement, to destruction in war, to responsibility for the oppression of non-Jewish fellows and, in the end, to atomic annihilation — before "the pogrom." But these obligations upon Jews as human beings and citizens are outside her scope, or even concern, if one is to judge from her writing.

Her conception of Jewishness and, in consequence, of a "Jewish" literature as set forth in the "Yavneh" essay, is so constricting that she would rule out an Issac Babel as a "Jewish" writer because he wrote about Cossacks. Though she does not say that she excludes him (and might be indignant at the suggestion), the conclusion is inescapable from her view that Babel joined the Cossacks in the war against Poland "to rest from the fatigue of being a Jew," as she wrote in "Holiness and its Discontents." He wanted to be "natural," but "one cannot have wholeness of mind" and at

6. Cynthia Ozick, "Hortense Calisher's Anti-Novel," *Midstream*, Vol. 15, No. 9 (Nov., 1969): 77, 80, 77.

7. "America: Toward Yavneh," p. 50.

the same time "live as a Jew." Writing about Cossack life, "to write naturally about what is most easily at hand . . . gives one wholeness of mind," she goes on, but this is not for Jews: "A Jewish literature is not a literature of wholeness."⁸ Her self-imposed straitjacket extends to all literature. If a piece of writing in the Diaspora, she says, is "not centrally Jewish, it will last neither for Jews nor for the host-nations," she asserts in the "Yavneh" essay. Aside from the difficulty of determining sometimes what is "centrally Jewish" and the inevitable differences of opinion about this imprecisely defined concept, Ozick instances Heine. Hitler, she says, "returned Heine permanently to the Jewish people. If he lasts, he lasts for us."⁹ And not for the non-Jewish world?

But what of Ozick's fiction? Clearly she does not regard her first work, *Trust*, as a "Jewish novel," since she wrote it while she was a passionate votary of High Art. Only at the book's end does she intimate her own conversion to Traditional Jewishness through Enoch Vand's turning to an intense study of the Jewish holy books, probably the counterpart of her own conversion. But there is a respect in which, in general terms, *Trust* announced the theme predominant in her fiction, namely, the distinction of the genuine, the authentic, from the false. In her stories, Ozick concentrates on her conception of Jewish authenticity as opposed to infidelity to it. And it is in the stories — none any longer than a novella, in contrast to the very long novel, as in *Trust* — that her language skills, inventiveness, and imaginative power appear to best advantage. In her essays she seems to me at times to have allowed these qualities to submerge logic and intellectual discipline.

The meaning of her stories becomes clear fairly quickly, in some cases, while in others it is obscure. Sometimes, indeed, meaning may be ambiguous, as for instance in "The Suitcase." The center of the story is the confrontation, in the 1960s, between Genevieve Levin, Jewish mistress of the painter Gottfried Hencke, and Gottfried's father, who was born in Germany, but who has lived in the United States and England since the 1920s. Genevieve charges him with having been an anti-Semite during the Hitler days, and he becomes pathetically confused and defensive in denial. It seems to me that the story does not validate Genevieve's accusation. Josephine Z. Knopp interpreted the "victim" to be Mr. Hencke, "who is victimized, reduced from strength and self-assurance to uncertainty and tearful guilt."¹⁰ In replying to Ms. Knopp, Ozick makes it clear that she did intend Mr. Hencke to have been guilty of Genevieve's charge.¹¹ Yet, the story is susceptible of a contrary interpretation.

8. "Holiness and its Discontents," pp. 10, 11.

9. "America: Toward Yavneh," p. 51, 52.

10. Josephine Z. Knopp, "The Jewish Stories of Cynthia Ozick," *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1975): 34-35.

11. Cynthia Ozick, "Response to Josephine Knopp," *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (Winter, 1975): 49-50.

Do her stories constitute, as she would hope, the “New Yiddish,” a genuinely Jewish manner, qualitatively different from the stories of what she calls “de-Judaized Jewish novelists?”¹² If one were not aware of Ozick’s theoretical aspirations to a New Yiddish, one would say that many of her stories are deeply informed by the Jewish tradition and by explicit Jewish content, and that their author is a fine practitioner of the English language. Her commitment to a pervasive Jewish spirit in her fiction also emerges from many of her stories.

Among the best of these are two in her first volume, *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (1971), “The Pagan Rabbi” (1966) and “Envy; or, Yiddish in America” (1969). The title story epitomizes her conception of the opposition to the embrace of the natural which we know “intuitively somehow feels different from being a Jew.” By fixing the Sabbath as a day of rest, she holds, the Jew has opposed himself to nature, in which one day is indistinguishable from another. So, if one chooses to be a Jew, one must choose “holiness” *against* nature: “yes, it is an either/or struggle.”¹³ The alleged opposition of Nature and the Law, implacably exemplified in remarkable imaginative form, and the conception and its transmutation from idea to picture is testimony to the depth of the author’s convictions.

While the story vivifies the struggle between the Orthodox tradition and the allure of a pagan love of nature, another Ozick story, on quite another plane of writing, “Envy; or, Yiddish in America,” is a brilliant evocation of the plight of a language which has lost its main constitutency through the Holocaust, and is losing viability as an everyday tool among acculturating later generations. In a mordantly comic vein the author exemplifies this struggle for the life of a language by pitting a fully translated Yiddish writer against another who cannot find a translator. The antagonism between the enormously successful Yankel Ostrover, a Yiddish writer translated copiously into English and many other languages, and Hershel Edelshtein, a Yiddish poet who cannot even get a translator and is bitterly envious of Ostrover’s success, is familiar to those acquainted with the Yiddish-speaking community. It is no secret that here is a thinly veiled view of the relations between Isaac Bashevis Singer and most Yiddish writers. Their judgment of him is very different from what it is in the non-Yiddish-speaking world. The late Jacob Glatstein, a leading Yiddish poet, wrote in 1965 that Singer’s fame is “fortuitous.” Yiddish writers are “puzzled” why he is far more popular in translation than in the original. Glatstein notes, as do the others, how far Singer is from the humanistic and social tradition of the classic Yiddish writers of fiction. The stories read better in English, Glatstein asserts, and he comments unfavorably on Singer’s Yiddish style and themes. Singer, he says, “has more friends and is read with greater interest” by English-speaking

12. “America: Toward Yavneh,” p. 52.

13. “Holiness and its Discontents,” p. 7, 11.

readers than by his Yiddish readers.¹⁴ Referring to the Yiddish writers in the story, Ozick writes:

They hated him (Ostrover-Singer) for the amazing thing that had happened to him — his fame . . . His Yiddish was impure, his sentences were amateur, vile. Or they raged against his subject matter, which was insanely sexual, pornographic, paranoid, freakish.

More important, however, is the use of this story's theme to vivify the predicament of Yiddish in the modern world. The readership of the writer in that language is not only miniscule now, but it is still shrinking. In the story, the neglected Yiddish poet, Edelshtein, says to the wife of a Yiddish colleague:

Your husband is finished. And I'm finished, period. We're already dead. Whoever uses Yiddish to keep himself alive is already dead. (As for Israel, it) had turned its face against Yiddish . . . In the God-given State of Israel they had no use for the language of the bad little interval between Canaan and now. Yiddish was inhabited by the past, and the new Jews did not want it.¹⁵

When one compares the author's command of such basically different tones as the religious fantasy underlying "The Pagan Rabbi" and the bitter, deeply ironic humor of "Envy," one realizes the versatility of her talent. "Envy" is a masterpiece, and will stand as a definitive literary evocation of the pathos of Yiddish in post-World War II United States.

In another story, "Virility," inauthenticity is conveyed through the misappropriation in New York by the erstwhile immigrant, Edmund Gate (né Elia Gatoff), of volumes of poetry sent to him from England by his Tante Rivka. Until he begins to receive these poems from his aunt, his own attempts at poetry are a failure, but when he decides to offer her works as his own, they prove a great success and he becomes a world celebrity. He names the first volume *Virility*, and successive ones *Virility II* and so on, until six have appeared. When his aunt dies, the flow stops. Gates confesses to the deception and dies shortly thereafter. But more of the poems remain and they are published as *Flowers from Liverpool* with Tante Rivka as the author, complete with picture. And now the point of the story emerges. Whereas the poems published under Gate's name have been regarded as "The Masculine Principle personified, verified, and illuminated," or "robust, lusty, male," and appear in volume after volume, under the title, "Virility," it is otherwise when the poetry by the same author, Tante Rivka, is published. Now the critics characterize her work as "thin, feminist art," "a lovely girlish voice reflecting a fragile girlish soul; a lace valentine," "limited as all domestic verse must be," etc., etc. After Josephine Z. Knopp recognized this story as emphatically a feminist

14. Jacob Glatstein, "The Fame of Bashevis Singer," *Congress Bi-Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 17 (Dec. 27, 1965): 11, 11-13.

15. Cynthia Ozick, "Envy; or Yiddish in America," pp. 47, 67, 48.

one,¹⁶ the author responded that it was “in fact a feminist tale . . . more than that, a tract.”¹⁷

During a visit to Israel in the summer of 1978, Ozick expressed herself in the strongest feminist terms in relation to the sexism of Judaism, and her address to a seminar at Bar-Ilan University, on Judaism and Contemporary Thought, must have shocked her audience. In light of the incalculable loss of potential Jewish talent in the Holocaust, she said, the Jews can no longer afford not to encourage the fullest contribution from women. She quotes the great contemporary Talmudic scholar, Adin Steinsaltz, who said that the Talmud “is the collective endeavour of the entire Jewish people.” This, she says unequivocally, is “a plain whopping lie on the face of it.” It is now, she says, a “necessity — *having lost so much and so many* — to share Jewish history to the hilt” with Jewish women. For the Talmud is the product of only “the male half” of the Jewish people; “Jewish women have been excluded — by purposeful excision — from this ‘collective endeavour of the Jewish people.’” Failure to allow Jewish women to participate has meant “the mass loss of half of the available Jewish minds.” She calls on Torah scholars to stop offering Jewish women “stopgap tactics, tinkering, placebos, and sops, all in the form of further separatism and isolation. So far, we can only refer to the ‘Jewish half-Genius.’ Only when complete and untrammelled access is permitted to women, will it be possible to speak of a ‘Jewish genius.’”¹⁸

If one considers this feminist critique on the part of a writer who is passionately trying to advance the conception of the Jew as one who lives within the tradition of Torah, Ozick’s more extended analysis of the place of women under Judaism, written in what she calls “fifteen brief meditations” and published in the Jewish feminist magazine, *Lilith*, in 1979, is even more deeply critical.¹⁹ Only a skeleton of her argument can be presented here.

She first dismisses as a “wrong question” whether God should be considered a “He” or a “She” because “the Creator of the Universe” is neither, is beyond pronouns. Further, it is the “wrong question” to regard the woman problem as “theological” — it is, rather, “sociological.” *Halakhah* she regards as a cumulative embodiment of “Scriptural aspirations toward decency of daily conduct and holiness of the ordinary.” But, under *halakhah*, women are regarded as “equal” but “distinct” from men with their separate functions. “Then simple justice is thwarted.” From the fact that women are regarded as “dependent” and “subordinate,” Ozick concludes that “My own synagogue is the only place in the world where I

16. Knopp, *loc. cit.* p. 34.

17. Ozick, “Reply to Josephine Knopp,” *loc. cit.*, p. 50.

18. Cynthia Ozick, “The Jewish Half-Genius,” *Jerusalem Post* international ed., Aug. 8, 1978, pp. 10, 11.

19. Cynthia Ozick, “Notes Toward Finding the Right Question,” *Lilith*, No. 6 (1979): 19, 20, 21, 27, 29.

am not considered a Jew." A woman is not even considered an adult, since, under *halakhah* she cannot be a witness and is in a category similar to "children and imbeciles." While a debtor or a thief can return to his status as a citizen after serving his sentence, it is not possible for a woman to change her status. As to women's desire to participate in the *minyan*, from which she is exempted, the issue is evaded by shifting the ground by saying that the home, not the synagogue is the center of Jewish life.

Ozick discusses historically the systematic denigration of possible female participation in Jewish writing. She then repeats the burden of her address in Israel the previous year, as discussed above. She finally meets frontally the argument that "the status of women is in fact a sacral question." She points out that in the Decalogue "women are perceived as part of the web of ownership." The Torah does not recognize the status of women "as an offense or an injustice." From this may one conclude that the status of women is "not only sanctioned, but divinely ordained," since the Torah otherwise expressly forbids cruelty and unjust behavior. Thus, Torah does not differ in its view of women from the rest of the world. Ozick's bold conclusion is: "This is the terrifying wall of scandal built within the Torah itself." Indeed, she goes so far as to say that this "scandal . . . calls Torah itself into question." But just as the Jewish people deprived of Jerusalem founded a Yavneh in Exile to follow Torah, so the Torah must seek a Yavneh in which conditions exist for a new Commandment, "*Thou shalt not lessen the humanity of women.*" She urges such a revision, she says, not because it will improve society or will adapt Judaism to "modern times;" for her, the necessity is nothing less than the preservation and strengthening of Torah itself.

In her second volume of short stories, *Bloodshed and Three Novellas* (1976), Ozick delineates duplicity in several forms, variations on the theme of inauthenticity, or betrayal of "trust." Since she had already been made aware that readers found some of her stories obscure in meaning, and since she affirmed her belief in the "stories' right to judge and interpret the world," she chose the unusual course of commenting on them in a Preface. The stories were written within the decade after 1964. The first, in sequence of writing, "An Education," relates the slow initiation into reality of a bright but unworldly student, Una, whose innocence is mercilessly exploited by an unsavory couple until she realizes the sort of people that they really are.

Another story in *Bloodshed* is "A Mercenary." This ironic descriptive term applies to the central character, a Polish Jew named Stanislaw Lushinski, who is an ambassador to the United Nations — not of Poland, not representing Jews either, but of a small African country. As a child, during the Second World War, he had been left with a Christian Polish family who had abandoned him in the forest, where he had managed to survive. In a television interview he tells about his survival and is "all mockery and parody . . . the man telling about the boy, Pole putting him-

self out as African, candor offering cunning." At the UN, he is known as the "P.M.," standing not for "Prime Minister" but for "Paid Mouthpiece." His mistress, Lulu, descended from a titled German family, taunts him with evading his Jewishness. "I know what *you* hate," she says. "You hate being part of the Jews." He replies, "I am not part of the Jews. I am part of mankind." "Practically no one knows you're a Jew," she adds. The author comments further: "Always he was cold to the Jews. He never went among them. In the Assembly he turned his back on the ambassador from Israel." His mistress has seen it, and she "heard the gallery gasp. All New York Jews in the gallery." In Africa, he is "the Prime Minister's gaudy pet."²⁰ He is, for Ozick, that most pathetic of men, an inauthentic, self-denying Jew.

The story "Bloodshed" (1970) brings out once again Ozick's view of Jewish authenticity. Bleilip goes to upstate New York to visit his cousin, Toby, and her husband, Yussel, who have "converted" to Hasidism and live in a Hasidic community. He, himself, lives a secular, non-Judaistic mode of life. On a visit to the Hasidic *shul*, Bleilip is challenged by the Rebbe about his Jewishness and his misapprehensions of Hasidism. To the Rebbe's "Who are you, what do you represent, what are you to us?" he replies, "A Jew. Like yourselves. One of you." But the Rebbe explodes: "Presumption! Atheist, devourer! For us there is the Most High, joy, life. For us trust! But you!" Bleilip's aspirations are limited to "only what he needed, a certain piece of truth, not too big to swallow. He was afraid of choking on more." With allusive richness Ozick reiterates her approach to the problem of who is a Jew, with the same astringent insistence on immersion in, and pursuit of life according to, the tradition of the sacred Jewish texts.

The final story, "Usurpation (Other People's Stories)," attacks the problem from another angle, the antagonism between art and Judaism, or, put more precisely, the danger of allowing the allure of art to be sought for its own sake, thus making of it an "idol." To the Jew, stories "ought to judge and interpret the world." So great is the danger of "idolatry" that the whole project of literary art is put into question. Because one critic found this story to be obscure, Ozick was led to write the Preface. There she says that English is inadequate to express the "Jewish Idea." The great eleventh century Hebrew poet, Ibn Gabirol, had worried "whether Jews should be story tellers," whether this activity does not violate the Second Commandment. Her story, she says, is "written against story telling."²¹ In it she adapts two other works, Malamud's "The Magic Crown" and David Stern's "Agnon, A Story," and the crown is the symbol for the attainment by the story-writer of false "idolatrous" values. Thus, for instance, the magic crown is passed on from one writer to another as

20. Cynthia Ozick, "A Mercenary," *Bloodshed and Three Novellas*, pp. 4, 28, 15, 40, 41, 51.

21. "Preface," *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10, 11.

prestige passes — “When a writer wishes to usurp the place and power of another writer, he simply puts it (the crown) on.” Most fundamentally, however, there will be “a cage for story writers” in Paradise, and they will be taught that “All that is not Law is levity.”²² In the end, storytelling is at the least trivial, at worst “idolatry.” Obviously, Ozick herself cannot abandon storytelling, but uses it to warn of its violation of Law. She recalls that even if Ibn Gabirol “felt the same,” he still “wrote poems.” “Why do demons choose to sink their hooves into black, black ink, as if ink were blood.”²³ Now we know why she titled her book *Bloodshed*.

Tracing Ozick’s creativity and thought requires alertness to the progress of her restless mind. Her latest speculation — at this writing — about an authentic Jewish literature appears in an essay, “Bialik’s Hint,” in the February, 1983, issue of *Commentary*. She now renounces her earlier theory of a “New Yiddish” as “my old fantasy.” Neither does she find “midrashic form” enough for a genuine Jewish literature. Confronting the situation of the modern Jewish writer and “modernism,” she now calls for a “fusion of the Enlightenment . . . with Jewish primacy.” This she regards as the “new alternative” to minimal or no Jewishness in total surrender to the Enlightenment mentality, which contemplates eventual assimilation. Instead, she proposes the combination of the “intellectual power” bestowed by the Enlightenment with profound immersion in “Jewish sensibility” and a study of the holy books. No specific language is required for this — Hebrew or “New Yiddish” or English — since she now believes that language is only a “vessel” for this new awareness. The fusion will not be accomplished quickly but will develop over generations. In conclusion: “If the hope of a saving midrashic form is not enough, and if the chimera of a New Yiddish is, at bottom, beside the point,” what is the answer? The alternative is “this unimaginable fusion of what we are as the children of the Enlightenment, what we are as the children of Israel (the people, not the State — L.H.), and what we are to become when these learn to comeingle.”

When Ozick, again stretching speculation, concludes this to be “inevitable,” one must demur. She has not reckoned with socioeconomic forces which have a way of frustrating speculation that neglects their power. But it will be interesting to watch for the influence of her new stage of thought on her future creative work.

Ozick has demonstrated that whatever she attempts, whether essay, review or fiction, she writes with extraordinary imaginative and linguistic power. Her reputation is prestigious in the intellectual community, but her readership is limited. Whether she will gain a wider audience, like so many of her Jewish literary colleagues, remains to be seen.

22. “Usurpation (Other People’s Stories),” *Bloodshed and Three Novellas*, pp. 147, 177.

23. “Preface,” *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Both Selective and Eclectic

Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah. By BERNARD SEPTIMUS. Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1982. ix + 180 pp., \$20.00

Reviewed by DAVID NOVAK

THIS book, the fourth volume in the Harvard Judaica Monograph series, was originally a doctoral dissertation written under Professor Isadore Twersky at Harvard. It deals with the career of R. Meir Abulafia, known as *Ramah* (d. 1244), an important Spanish talmudist and halakist. Professor Septimus emphasizes Ramah's role in the transition of Spanish Jewish culture from Muslim Spain to Christian Spain, the inroads of, at first, Maimonidean-Aristotelian rationalism and, later, kabbalah, and the scholarly interchange between Sephardic and Ashkenazic scholarship in the thirteenth century. In his preface, Septimus notes "that the space allotted in this book to Ramah's halakah is not proportional to its historical significance" (p. viii). Thus, the book is concerned with Ramah's role in Jewish cultural history rather than his role in the history of halakah per se.

The overall picture which emerges from this study is of a conservative in the best sense of this term, i.e., a religious leader who attempted to incorporate into the tradition those innovations that he believed were consistent with its overall *Tendenz*, and who rejected those that he believed to be so revo-

lutionary as to be inconsistent with the tradition as a whole.

As regards the relation between Jewish tradition and philosophy, there were three options for thirteenth century Jews: (1) One could reject out of hand all attempts to philosophize about Judaism as being essentially illegitimate. This was the approach of the French Ashkenazic rabbis and the Spanish rabbis whom they began to influence. (2) One could accept the premises of the Aristotelian philosophers and use them to reinterpret Judaism. This was the approach of the Maimonists. (3) One could use philosophy, understood as an eclectic body of opinion, basically to buttress and clarify traditional Judaism. This was the apologetic approach of the Jewish adherents of Kalam, among them, first and foremost, Saadya Gaon. As Septimus points out,

Clearly Ramah was no antiphilosophical obscurantist . . . his philosophical tastes appear quite conservative . . . he was still staunchly committed to the moderate balance between reason and tradition struck by Saadya Gaon . . . (p. 19)

Thus, Ramah was quite selective in his use of philosophical ideas and this was consistent with his overall intellectual project dedicated at all times to the primacy of halakah as the basic content and concern of the Jewish intellect. This approach comes out in his rejection of Maimonides' attempt to play down, if not actually explain away, the traditional doctrine of physical resurrection (*tehiyyat ha-metim*). For, among other things, the doctrine of physical resurrection empha-

sizes the equal importance of the body with the soul, something which the this-worldliness of halakah certainly presupposes. Moreover, not only was he concerned that Maimonides had deviated from traditional teaching, but he was also concerned that, by doing so, he had denied to the Jewish masses the hope of an ultimate triumph over death. Finally, he was concerned about how the Maimonists were spreading disunity and dissent in European Jewry.

The selective character of Ramah's scholarship as a halakist is again emphasized. Septimius shows how he incorporated and popularized among Spanish talmudists the insights and methods of Provençal and French scholars. This procedure was important because, throughout the history of halakah, there has always been an attempt to synthesize the various approaches in the interest of maintaining the unity of the whole halakic process for the unity of the Jewish people. Without such constant synthesizing, Jewish law would quickly become "like two Torahs" (or more), as the rabbis put it in a melancholy reflection on Jewish disunity. Furthermore, although Ramah had the highest regard for Maimonides as a halakist, he nevertheless considered his work to have its imperfections and, therefore, it had to be critically incorporated into the entire halakic process along with the work of other competent halakists.

Although Ramah was well aware of the spiritually disquieting situation in thirteenth century Spanish Jewry to which Maimonidean rationalism was a powerful response, he was also aware of the inroads of kabbalah, which addressed the same spiritual concerns as did philosophy, but from a different vantage point. What is more, it gained more acceptance from the Hispano-Jewish elite than did phi-

losophy. Here again, although Ramah did not reject kabbalah out of hand, he was highly selective in his use of it in his overall exegesis of classical rabbinic texts. As in the case of Maimonidean rationalism, where he did not accept its basic premises, so, too, with kabbalah, Septimius points out that "Ramah almost certainly did not accept the central kabbalistic doctrine of the *sefirot* . . ." (p. 106). As he points out in the conclusion, "In an age of widespread conversion to both Maimonidean rationalism and kabbalah, he remained rooted in geonic-Andalusian conservatism" (p. 114).

This important study is well written, well organized, and attractive in being free of the usual "dissertationese" that one finds all too often in such monographs. This reviewer has only one suggestion. The real value of Ramah's work for contemporary Jewish thought lies in his specific halakic interpretations and broader conceptualizations. Whereas one could argue about the extent to which Ramah's historical period is analogous to our own, surely there is an unbroken halakic continuum between him and us. Hence, a critical exposition of his work as a halakist would have immediate significance for our concern for what is the halakah on various specific points, and what the halakah is, in general, as a system by which Jews live. Let us hope, then, that this work is just the *Vorstudien* for a larger work on Ramah as a halakist, a work that Professor Septimius is eminently well qualified to write. It would be the perfect sequel to this fine volume.

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Jews Must Remember

Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory. By YOSEF HAYIM YERUSHALMI. Seattle. University of Washington Press, 1982.

Reviewed by SIDNEY H. SCHWARZ

ZAKHOR is a sobering book for a Jewish historian to read. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, who ably succeeds the dean of Jewish historians, Salo Baron, at Columbia, has forced us to confront the enterprise of Jewish scholarship today. Judging by the proliferation of titles on every aspect of Jewish history and literature, things could not be better. But, mindful of Kohelet — “Beware of making many books, for there is no end of it” (12:12) — Yerushalmi examines the role of historiography in Jewish history and challenges the assumption that knowledge of Jewish history necessarily advances our group identity and survival. While he is critical of the historian’s tendency to assume that everything in the past is worth knowing and, thus, a justification for another book on the matter, his own book is a shining example of the kind of history that is worth reading for both the scholar and general reader. As prodigious as is the scholarship that was required for this work, Yerushalmi does not flaunt it. The book is written concisely and the facts are always marshalled to support his major themes.

It may come as a surprise to some that the People of the Book are latecomers to the enterprise of writing history. The Bible is a record of the Jewish people’s covenant with God and the history that it records is secondary to that larger theological theme. Yet, although the earliest recorders of the Jewish past were not, in the modern sense, scientific gatherers of information, the task that they sought to perform — to create a

theological interpretation of history that yielded meaning to successive generations of Jews — they accomplished without equals in the ancient world. The sages of the rabbinic period were convinced that whatever truths were worth knowing could be culled from the many layers of meaning in the Bible, and, despite the interpretive genius which they displayed, they showed little sensitivity to the history that they themselves were part of. They bequeathed to later generations of Jews much religious insight but little history.

In the Middle Ages, too, Jews did not gravitate to the writing of history. With all the intercourse that existed with Arabic culture, Jews seemed to adapt to every new discipline (e.g., philosophy, science, linguistics) but not to history. A book such as Ibn Daud’s *Sefer Ha-Qabbalah* is not a scientific historical record since it is preoccupied with what Gerson Cohen has called symmetry in history. The effort to place all events into a scheme familiar from the past may be conducive to re-enforcing the belief in universal patterns of God’s relationship with the Jewish people, but it does not produce true history. The other vehicles of memory that were prominent during the Middle Ages were commemorative rituals and liturgies. This patterned way of remembering events created a resistance to viewing the past in an objective or critical light. The medieval world offered Jews three distinct and largely self-contained intellectual orientations — halakhah, philosophy and kabbalah. None required history.

Yerushalmi suggests that the rise of Jewish historiography in the 16th century was a direct result of the Spanish expulsion which overshadowed the tragedies that preceded it because it forced Jews out of Western lands of settlement and back to the East. This seems to be

an insufficient explanation of why a people so resistant to historiography suddenly took to the craft. Nevertheless, the reaction to Azariah de Rossi's *Meor Eynayim* does substantiate Yerushalmi's claim that this first history to break with its schematized forerunners was a *novum* for Jewish scholarship. Filled with apologies for the seemingly frivolous undertaking, *Meor Eynayim* evaluated rabbinic literature in the light of what was known about general history. That inconsistencies in sacred texts were exposed was positively shocking to Jews of the 16th century. The choice between the texts that guided Jews for centuries, and a book from an upstart Jewish historian was not difficult to make. De Rossi's book was banned by the Jewish authorities. Not only did the popular Jewish mind prefer rabbinic texts to historiography, but there was also a distinct preference for the ahistorical worldview provided by kabbalah. According to that orientation, Jewish exile was to be understood not through military and political facts but by realizing that Jewish destiny was determined prior to the creation of the world. God's plan for the Jews was seen to be inherent in the universe.

That Jewish resistance to historiography disappeared in the modern period is not surprising, given the accurate description of the time as the Age of Science. The *Wissenschaft* school marked a turning point for it began the first systematic, scientific examination of the Jewish past. Yet it is not sufficient to explain this 18th century phenomenon as simply the Jewish counterpoint to the renewed interest of other peoples in their national histories. Yerushalmi believes that a more fundamental change has taken place in the consciousness of Jews in the modern period.

The modern effort to reconstruct the Jewish past begins at a time that witnesses a sharp break in the continuity of Jewish living and hence also an ever growing decay of Jewish group memory. In this sense, if for no other, history becomes what it had never been before — the faith of fallen Jews. For the first time history, not a sacred text, becomes the arbiter of Judaism (p. 86).

In other words, history begins when memory fades. The suggestion is troubling. In an earlier chapter, Yerushalmi states that the failure of historiography to take hold during the middle ages may have been a function of the fact that past generations possessed a cultural self-sufficiency that we lack (p. 34). This is reminiscent of the Hasidic tale which relates that when successive generations forgot the prayer, the melody and the place in the forest where the Baal Shem Tov had lit a fire to make personal pleas to God, they had to be satisfied simply to tell the story. Is it a coincidence that, concurrent with the alarming breakdown of Jewish practice and observance in our day, there is an explosion of Jewish historical research? Perhaps study is no longer a form of worship but its surrogate!

That there is discontinuity is clear. When Jewish history broke free of the shackles of overarching theological themes, it also began to repudiate time honored Jewish assumptions about Divine Providence and the uniqueness of Jews in the world. As Jewish history became more scientific and thus, secularized, accuracy became more important than meaning, a historical reversal of the grandest scale.

All this brings us to the crux of Yerushalmi's point — the relationship between Jewish history and Jewish memory. He correctly observes that, as historical research becomes more sophisticated,

smaller and smaller pieces of the Jewish past are put under the scholarly magnifying glass. It should then come as no surprise that a unifying theme or an overarching meaning to history cannot possibly emerge. Yet, if he is correct in claiming that meaning is more important to the Jewish psyche than is history, then Jews will instinctively resist the assault of contemporary historical research on their collective memory.

Every people has a selective memory which tends to sustain group consciousness and survival. That many of these memories can be exposed as myths by the meticulous historian does not lessen their importance; it only tends to make the historian either suspect or irrelevant. The time is probably past when a historian suffers the fate of an Azariah de Rossi, but the concern about historiography's irrelevance is not unfounded. Yerushalmi fears that, today, novels are offering Jews more compelling ideas and memories than is historiography. Yet, his commitment to historical scholarship is such that he is not prepared to cede its role as a potential influence on the Jewish mind.

Despite the anti-historical bias of Jews that persists in many circles even today, history cannot be sacrificed in order to preserve the precious shards of memory that hold Jews together. Jewish history may never replace Jewish memory but that history can be written in such a way so as to stake out a respected place in the collective Jewish consciousness. This will happen, however, only when historians turn their attention to periods when Jews were faced with great discontinuities with the past. Then, the understanding of how Jews adapted and survived may become meaningful lessons for the comparable challenges that we, as Jews, face today.

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Beyond Equality

On Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader.
Ed. by SUSANNAH HESCHEL. New York. Schocken Books, 1983. 256 pp., \$20.00 (\$9.95 paper).

Reviewed by SHULAMIT MAGNUS

SUSANNAH HESCHEL'S anthology is testimony to a rather remarkable development in thinking on the "Jewish women's question" since the Jewish women's movement began in earnest just over ten years ago. That movement got started when Jewish women began to apply the feminist critique of American society and western religions to Jewish society and religion. Since, however, most of Jewish society lagged far behind general society in its position on women — blocking women's access to professional education (rabbinical training), denying them voice and the possibility of leadership in society's central organs (the synagogue and powerful communal institutions), not even counting them in the census (*minyan*), the Jewish women's movement necessarily took off as a civil rights movement, demanding full and equal citizenship. As the Jewish Feminist Organization put it in 1974, "We seek nothing else than the full, direct and equal participation of women at all levels of Jewish life — communal, educational and political."

Jewish feminists quickly proceeded, however, beyond demands for equality into a radical questioning of the system that they would enter. The goal shifted away from mere attainment of the right

to fulfill roles traditionally reserved for men. It is now no longer a question of discrete advances — women wearing *talitot*, having *aliyot*, even being ordained — but of revolution. The question, as Heschel tells us now, is no longer one of civil rights, but of theology; not the admissibility of women to rabbinical school, but what they learn when they get there. The problem, she and many of her contributors state, is not merely Jewish society, but Jewish tradition — Judaism itself. The new agenda is nothing less than the creation of a feminist Jewish theology, since everything currently available is the fruit of the male Jewish mind and psyche (and ego); it is the expression of the male Jew's history and experience, writ large and presented as "Jewish" when, in reality, it represents nothing but itself.

In a searing Introduction to the collection, Heschel dismisses the positions taken by all the movements of modern Judaism on the "women's question." Ultimately, she says, all fail on this issue as they have failed in the larger task of redefining Judaism in the modern, secular age, because their theology is either incredible or inadequate. Using Kafka's parable, "Before the Law," Heschel asserts that the time has come for women to stop turning to men and their institutions for remedies, arguing, in effect, that Jewish women have reached the age of adult responsibility on this issue and must claim their own Jewish birthright. In a new twist on the old injunction, "*lo bashamayim hi*," Heschel seems to be saying that Torah is not to be sought in the yeshiva, or in the seminary, either.

Heschel criticizes but does not, however, propose, and her Introduction is, thus, distressingly negative in tone. Some of her criticism of the major movements, moreover, seems unfair. It is anachron-

istic, in 1983, to speak of Reform in terms of Geiger, and it is inaccurate, for that matter, to speak of Reconstructionism in terms of Kaplan's writings in the twenties and thirties. The question is not only why it took the Reform movement over one hundred years to ordain women rabbis or to address the problem of sexist liturgy, but why, and with what understandings and commitments, these changes have lately come about. Heschel's assertion that none of the movements (except Orthodoxy, I dare say), historically has addressed the feminist critique through an application of its own central principles, is true as far as it goes, but this does not mean that these principles are inherently inadequate to the ethical-theological challenge posed by feminism. It is entirely conceivable that Reform's "Spirit," Conservatism's "historical consciousness" and Reconstructionism's "evolving civilization" can be redefined in such a way as to make feminist change not only possible but imperative; this, in fact, is the means by which feminists in those movements have already agitated for, and effected, change. (Limited reform is possible in this fashion even within Orthodoxy, which, unlike the other movements, will never advocate change on any issue *le-khat'hilah*, but when, *bedi'abhad* it is pushed to the wall, it will respond to the change.)

The existence of Jewish feminism as a spiritual and political force independent of the established movements is undoubtedly necessary and good for the preservation of its own philosophical purity and clarity. But the vast majority of affiliated Jewish women and men will remain within the established movements of American Judaism and these, therefore, cannot be utterly abandoned. Their theologies, lacking though they may be, must be prodded to repair

and to growth — unless and until something better comes along. Unapologetic, non-pleading Jewish feminism, the kind that Heschel advocates, is not yet developed enough to present a full-blown alternative to the movements and all they offer. It has, as she notes, its own weighty theological issues to confront:

If feminists do indeed bring about all the changes their critique implies, what will remain as recognizably Judaism? What criteria, what grounds of authority, will be used to retain some aspects of Judaism while rejecting or radically modifying others?

This, of course, is the central problem which has confronted all the movements of modern Judaism and which, says Heschel, all have failed to resolve satisfactorily. It is no small task for a new theology to take on.

But, aside from this, one wonders whether Heschel's central assertion — that the real question is theological — is correct, when the Judaism of the vast majority of American Jews is practical and non-religious, certainly non-theological. Where does Heschel's analysis leave the secular, but committed, Jewish feminist whose nemesis is not a rabbinical establishment but Federation? The community activists whose concern is precisely Jewish society and not Judaism? One suspects that Israeli feminists such as Leslie Hazelton, a segment of whose superb book is reprinted here, would react similarly. Theology is, without doubt, an essential subject for Jewish feminists to rework, but it is not the only, or necessarily the most important, subject. It is true that a demand for equal rights must eventually yield to a deeper probing of the value and meaning of the rights being attained, but even this questioning is not confined to purely religious matters.

Who says that the way men have run Jewish welfare, educational and defense organizations has been the best? Is it sufficient for Jewish women to advance to leadership positions in these institutions only to run them precisely as men have? And if not in this manner, then how? Theology will not provide the answer here.

Given Heschel's chosen focus — and it is one that was in dire need of attention — her collection is a marvelous array of opinions and experiences whose variety is the more praiseworthy, given her own pronounced views. Half of the articles appear here in print for the first time; the reprints are some of the best material around: Rachel Adler's "The Jew Who Wasn't There," Cynthia Ozick's "Notes Toward Finding the Right Question," the latter with a trenchant new rejoinder by Judith Plaskow. Aside from essays, we have memoirs — from a woman raised in Orthodoxy who turned from it because of the rigidity and cruelty that she experienced; from another who identifies Judaism with Orthodoxy and who adamantly claims this heritage, yet who also counts herself a feminist; from a lesbian negotiating a difficult path between personal and Jewish affirmation.

The quality of the material is superb, and each of the book's three sections is introduced by the always intelligent, lucid voice of Heschel. One would wish more on what "feminist Judaism" is than the few pieces provided here, but perhaps it is too soon for that. Given the rapidity of developments on this issue, however — Heschel's own Introduction is now dated by the admission of women to the rabbinical program at J.T.S. — one can reasonably expect elaboration of this theme, perhaps by Heschel herself, now that much of the analytic groundwork has been laid.

For now, this book offers a great deal, to the merely interested as well as the passionately committed. It is an immensely valuable resource, a provocative book, in the best sense of the word.

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A Challenge to All of Us

To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought. By EMIL L. FACKENHEIM. New York. Schocken Books, 1982. xii, 362 pp., \$22.50.

Reviewed by FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

To Mend the World by Emil Fackenheim is one of the most important books of Jewish philosophy in recent decades. For this reviewer, its impact is comparable to that felt many years ago from Mordecai M. Kaplan's *Judaism as a Civilization* (1934).

The perspectives of the two books are very different, but both yield a rich harvest to the student who is willing to make a real effort. Dr. Kaplan's book profoundly affected American Judaism. Fifty years later there is a significant movement on the scene, Reconstructionism, which his work, in large part, inspired. It remains to be seen if Professor Fackenheim's work, at once more conservative and more radical, will have a comparable effect — which it richly deserves.

To Mend the World belongs to another age, dealing radically with the crisis of faith induced by an "epoch-making" event: the Holocaust. The Holocaust calls into question traditional assumptions

about God's relationship with His people. Just as radically, it challenges the assumptions of the Enlightenment and Emancipation — that Jews might find peace in the diaspora, becoming fully entitled citizens observing a religion known as "Judaism" alongside their neighbors' "Christianity." This solution proved illusory: German Jews found assimilation a death trap.

Moreover the stance was inauthentic. In the world of the Enlightenment, only Jews were expected to be man-in-general. Others were allowed their particularisms (cf. pp. 96, 193). In the post-Auschwitz world, Jewish identity has become, for Jews, a central philosophical issue. Fackenheim considers that, of the front rank of philosophical thinkers, only Spinoza and Rosenzweig pondered this truth in depth (p. 33).

For Fackenheim, the Holocaust was the end of "Judaism:" "even the apex of Jewish spiritual existence is systematically impossible without a matrix in the flesh-and-blood 'people' (discussing Rosenzweig, p. 7). The Holocaust also marks the end of "Christian Constantinianism" (with reference to Hegel, pp. 9, 128).

Today, to define one's self as a Jew cannot be primarily an individualistic and rational task. Whatever else it means in belief and practice, it means acceptance of participation in the history and destiny of a "peculiar people."

After thorough discussion of the messages of Spinoza and Rosenzweig, Fackenheim proceeds to present his own message. He struggles with the basic questions as only a serious philosopher does, and his discussions are well worth the reader's struggling along with him. His refutation of Martin Heidegger is especially powerful: Heidegger came to deplore the evil consequences of World War II, but it never occurred to him to question

how his own philosophical presuppositions had helped to prepare the way into it.

Nor have the most famous Christian thinkers — Tillich and Bultmann, for example, who wrote after World War II as they had written before it (p. 193) — confronted the crisis in religious thought. For Fackenheim, on the other hand, true religious discussion is not just a “head trip:” after the Holocaust, truth is a matter of death and life.

Moreover, responsible religious/philosophical thinking must be related to real life lived by real people.

Our post-Holocaust thought, however authentic in other respects, would still lapse into unauthenticity if it remains in an academically self-enclosed circle — if it failed to point to, and help make possible, a post-Holocaust life (p. 249).

Fackenheim’s treatment of Christianity is also powerful, although secondary to his main thrust. Unlike the Jewish people (whether they like it or not), the Christian churches have not yet “returned into history.” Christianity, too, ruptured and incredible, stands in need of a *Tikkun* (p. 278).

Not one to separate theory from practice in the way so common among modern academics, one of Professor Fackenheim’s basic answers has been a personal one: to make *aliyah* with his family and to teach at The Hebrew University (Jerusalem). This, too, is in line with his understanding of authentic religious philosophy.

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Transcendentalism with a Jewish *Ta’am*

These Holy Sparks: The Rebirth of the Jewish People. By ARTHUR WASKOW. New York. Harper & Row, 1983. 210 pp., \$11.95.

Reviewed by SANFORD PINSKER

NO doubt Professor Waskow will be upset by the title of my review, for his latest book is at once a chronicle of his own wrestling with God and a blueprint for nothing less than “the rebirth of the Jewish people.” But the spirit that Ralph Waldo Emerson had in mind when he defined Transcendentalism as “a Saturnalia of Faith” is not unlike the spirit one meets, again and again, in Waskow’s passionate cheerleading on behalf of the New:

In Philadelphia, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi — rebbe of a neo-Hassidic movement called B’nai Or, who was already drawing on Buddhist and Sufi and Gestalt-psychology practices for Jewish purposes — asked people at a *Simchas Torah* retreat to do the traditional Jewish dances in a new way. They divided themselves into seven grouplets, each to plan how to do one of the *hakkafot* — the seven dancings of the Torah — in accordance with one of the seven mystical *S’phirot*. . . . The *hakkafot* came out in remarkably different forms of dance, song, and readings. . . . Suddenly the *S’phirot* came alive to the celebrants — not “before their eyes,” but in their bones (p. 82).

Transcendentalism, whether in its original Emersonian form or in the hundreds of variants that our restless American culture dreams up, is made of exactly this sort of hodge-podge: a dash of ersatz mysticism, a pinch of the East, a giddy sense of making it up as one goes along and, of course, an earnestness about the whole thing. In a word, Romanticism.

As Waskow would have it, we Jews have lost touch with or-

ganicism, with the intertwined visions of "a universal G-d and of a single holy people, the dream of Zion and the dream of Messiah, the process of working out the everyday details of the *halakhic* path-of-life, and the long-range re-visioning and re-making of that path by midrash and *aggada*" (p. 3). Modernism shattered our community or, in his kabbalistic analogy, it dispersed the holy sparks that are now isolated, alienated, obscured by husks. To our generation falls the task of "regathering these sparks."

Emerson complained about what he called "cold-corpse" Unitarianism, pointing out that piety had calcified into sterile forms, that rationalism had drained away the passion, the ecstasy that he felt was essential. Waskow has at least as much to complain about when he turns his attention toward institutional Judaism, to its failures on behalf of Jewish education, its entrenched male chauvinism, its apolitical posture, its inauthentic "Jewish" organizations and Community Centers, but he prefers to talk about "what's happening now" — especially in the *havurah* movement — and how it got there.

For Waskow, the story begins in April, 1968 as he found himself connecting the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. with the observance of the Passover Seder:

That night, for the first time, I broke open the form of the Hagadah to talk about the streets and what was happening to us. For the first time I felt the Seder a moment not for high and solemn recitation, but for burning passion and hard thinking . . . [That moment] when I reconnected the spark of "telling" and the spark of "acting," the spark of "Jewish" and the spark of "universal," the spark of memory and the spark of hope, the spark of ceremony and the spark of spontaneity, the spark of outer practice and the spark of inner meaning —

this was the moment when, for me, the path of my life began to turn to a new direction, to new directedness (pp. 11-13).

One immediate result of Waskow's radically altered perspective was his *Freedom Seder: A New Hagaddah for Passover*, a book that would make it possible for others to have something of the same experience when they sat around their Passover tables. Another was Waskow's shaping force in the development of the *havurah* or fellowship movement that began — if such an ad hoc, loosely structured entity can be said to have a "beginning" — in 1971.

In their salad days, *havurot* were what the media liked to call "counter-cultural" — that is, Anti-Establishment, Idealistic, Under 30:

A number of people, usually between twenty and forty, gather on a Friday night. Their clothes are loose, relaxed, colorful, pretty — the kind of clothing that encourages its wearers to move around, sing, hug each other, sit cross-legged on a cushion or the floor. They gather in a rough circle — some on cushions, some on chairs. A five-year-old walks around to greet his grown-up friends. Someone picks up a guitar; someone else passes out prayer books. The conversation hushes; the guitarist begins to chant a wordless tune. The others join in; the tune repeats, repeats again, and still again. Bodies start to sway; taut muscles start to loosen. The tune develops into a song, into a prayer. The guitar rests (p. 14).

For many, this was an inkling, an "intimation" to use the Romantics' term, of what *Shabbos* could be. It is as easy to dismiss those times, those cultural moments as it is to be nostalgic about their passing. One thing, however, is clear — pass they did, but the *havurah* movement has found ways to adapt itself to increasingly large segments of the Jewish-American community.

These Holy Sparks is, in effect, a

report card about what has been tried and an agenda for what still needs to be done. For example, Waskow feels that our seminaries were formed by, and are still stuck in, modernist ideas about how to teach and learn: "They teach a great deal like graduate or professional schools of law, history, or clinical psychology. Their students attend lectures, take exams, write papers" (p. 36). His advice? Train rabbis to sing-and-play guitars like, say, Shlomo Carlebach; teach rabbis how *not* to give sermons, but, instead, to lead good round-the-circle discussions; train rabbinical students to be poets or playwrights or mimes or dancers or storytellers; and, most of all, make love an integral part of their teaching-and-learning.

On every issue — be it "Jewish feminism" or the Peace Movement — Waskow positions himself a little left of the angels. Above all else, he is for Love — which tends to make disagreeing with him difficult. Should our seminaries balk about transforming themselves into Rabbinic Schools for the Performing Arts, does that mean, necessarily,

that they stand foursquare for "hate"? No matter, at least in this case, because Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi has decided that three rabbis and a "Seminary Without Walls" are sufficient to grant *smicha*. Those congregations searching for a rabbi with a background in Buddhism and Sufi need worry no longer.

With all my reservations — and they are considerable — *These Holy Sparks* is exactly the sort of disturbing, challenging, hectoring presence that American Jewry needs. The kabbalists were fond of using the onion as an analogue. Some of the skins in Waskow's book strike me as being trendy, others as being glibly popularizing. At its core, however, there is much to talk about and to learn from. I say this as one who belongs to a *havurah*, who "uses" Waskow's best suggestions, but who regards him as neither my *rebbe* nor my guru.

SANFORD PINSKER is chairman of the English department at Franklin & Marshall College. During 1984-85 he will be a Fulbright Professor in Belgium.

For My Son Randall In Israel

(after reading The Iliad)

MADELINE TIGER BASS

If you go beyond our walls
if you go far and stay far away
if you have no known address
if that last phone call was my last word from you
if you choose to wear a shield blazing with light from the east
if you cover your arms with metal
if your flesh turns bronze and your hair mats in fury
if you stand at a border where I cannot see you
I will not play Hecuba; then, my son

If you work in the fields
I won't call you from the fields
I will cultivate the soil around the cucumbers here
and save the tomatoes on the windowsill
reddening into every November
I will feed your brothers and give your sister news
as they come and go in their turns

If you darken, a Mediterranean man
if you dance in mysterious circles
if a minor key suits your new singing
if you carry a long gun on your back when you travel
if you are suspicious on buses and learn
to look over your shoulder for the enemy
if you become the guard of the children
if you speak perfect Other and make Aliyah

I will sing you a ballad, Randall my son
I will sing for your sleep, my handsome young man
I will know you have been here, Randall my son
I will know you have been here, my farewell man

MADELINE TIGER BASS *teaches English and poetry writing. Her own poetry has been published in many periodicals and anthologies.*

On God and the Holocaust

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

John Fischer's article "God After the Holocaust: An Attempted Reconciliation" in your summer 1983 issue requires some comments.

He poses the basic question "How could a loving, powerful God have allowed the Holocaust?" He describes many different attempts to answer this question throughout Jewish history and while offering a version of his own, he ends with the statement "we have reached the border of mystery." In other words, he offers no satisfactory logical explanation, and we are back at the point from which we started. Dr. Fischer's conclusion could have been predicted. Theological efforts which attempt to filter the events of history through the prism of Divine providence substitute a greater unknown for a lesser one — a method which would not be acceptable in any other field of disciplined inquiry.

The alternative, however, is *not* to sever the Divine and human orders completely. No theology with so radical a separation as its premise could legitimate itself as Jewish. What is necessary is to understand Divine Providence in history through human agency which creates history — in a word, to recognize that man stands in a partnership with God, the very terms of which make man responsible for his fate. The essential role of Providence is, metaphysically, to constitute man with the freedom necessary to discharge this responsibility. Given this premise, the rest belongs to man.

The Holocaust must *not* be directed to God. Man is the culprit, by his rejection of God's assignment of the world to man. God works in history only to the extent that man actualizes his partnership with God. God cannot work through evil people, who are evil pre-

cisely because they reject God's challenge to accept the responsibility for this world. Understood in this way, new areas of theological concern can be developed. It is sufficient to mention Fackenheim's rejection of Hitler as an instrument of providence because of the radicality of his evil — a position which bases itself on Rabbinic precedent, and Maybaum's assimilation of that very Biblical precedent to grasp the parameters of the new theological agenda which has man's action in history as its central focus.

Fischer describes the dilemma of evil coexisting with God thus:

1. God is responsible for making everything in the world, including human freedom.
2. Human freedom is what brought about moral evil in the world.
3. Hence, God is responsible for what brought about moral evil in the world.

In my view, the dilemma could be eliminated by restating the premise.

1. God gave man freedom, a sort of two dimensional freedom.
2. God assigned this world to man and challenges man to accept the responsibility of human existence. This provides a depth dimension of freedom which translates absolute freedom into responsible freedom, a necessary precondition for partnership with God.
3. Hence, it is man, in rejecting this assignment by God, who is the source of moral evil in the world. It is not the possibility of choice, but the actual choice that determines whether evil will prevail.

One other point deserves attention. Fischer lauds God's long-suffering of the wicked. Thus, God lets good people suffer and die for the sake of patience with evil people who eventually may see the light and repent. In that

concept, God gives men and nations the opportunity to fulfill their responsibility and act justly. Such a God acting in history must be held responsible for the Holocaust and the death of even one child. This borders on the obscene.
Aberdeen, MD **SIDNEY BREITBART**

Dr. Fischer replies:

I find Mr. Breitbart's comments both attractive and perplexing. They are attractive because his positions are those for which I argued in my article. They are perplexing because he apparently has not read carefully enough to see this is so.

My paper does not "shift the center of God's concern . . . in favor of the wicked" and away from the righteous. As my article points out, God acted on behalf of our people by thwarting the ultimate intentions of the perpetrators of the Holocaust and by effecting the emergence of the modern state of Israel.

Nor do I "sever the Divine and human orders." I argue that man "is morally responsible for all of his own actions;" he is accountable.

Finally, after quoting the three-part syllogism near the end of my article, he goes on to reconstruct it in a fashion almost identical to the way in which it needed to be restructured and interpreted, as I explained in the following paragraphs.

I appreciate his interest and insight but wish there had been more precision and care in his reading.

Palm Harbor, FL **JOHN FISCHER**



A Personal Response. . . .

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

I have read and re-read the Winter 1984 issue of JUDAISM entitled "Women As Rabbis . . ." This is a personal response to the articles. I have no credentials as a scholar, nor would I presume to comment on the interpre-

tations offered by such eminent writers. To all of them I give total respect and attention, but I would also like to give my untutored reaction to their collective wisdom.

A clear case has been made for the ordination of women as rabbis: 1) It is pragmatically necessary . . . ; 2) it is ethically just . . . ; 3) it is traditionally sound — according to most viewpoints. There were moments when the divergent opinions reminded me of economists and their monetary projections. Each has a way of sounding valid and logical in turn, but when a conflicting point of view is presented, which should you believe?

My own feeling is that, regardless of whose opinion you agree with, the imperatives of need and ethics are sufficient to command some sort of adjustment to our interpretation of halakhic rules. . . . But I feel uneasy. This "inevitable" step seems contrary to natural law . . . not the laws of Halakhah but the laws of nature, the order of the universe, "God's plan," if you will.

Observe the other species: the insects that have survived for millions of years, forming communities comparable to our own in complexity; the birds and creatures of land and sea that migrate across continents each year, making our advanced navigational tools appear cumbersome and elementary. Such awesome skills can be found by the hundreds in the world of nature. They must be viewed in the context of the miracle of creation, and our place as human beings becomes a minute part of the whole perspective.

It is notable that each species (except hermaphrodites) has separate roles for male and female, and every behavior pattern serves to protect the survival of the species. Deviations and aberrations lead to destruction.

I suggest that we view the rules of our Torah in this same perspective. Though many are now irrelevant, none was a waste of words. The traditional male and female roles, however outdated, were designed to protect the survival of our religion along with the

survival of the species. Drastic revision may put both at risk. The question arises, are we wise enough to know what is good for us? When I consider the ability of other creatures on this planet, I am less than overwhelmed by our human intellect.

Where has our brain brought us? Each technological advance seems to have a corollary step backwards. What should bring us a blessing has included a curse: electricity that gives light to the world also becomes the legal murder weapon in many of our states; atomic energy, which could empower warmth and productivity for everyone, in fact threatens to destroy us. We have polluted our environment to a degree that undermines our very existence. We blind ourselves to the needs that unite mankind and pursue self-serving goals instead.

We were created in the image of God and given dominion over the other creatures, but, despite our gifts of thought and reason we have failed to demonstrate superior wisdom. The human condition has hardly improved in the thousands of years of recorded history, and we are no closer to bringing about God's kingdom on earth than we were when the ideal was born.

When you get down to basics of human nature, the female child-bearing role has its counterpart in the traditional male role of looking after the needs of the female. To deny a separation of roles invites an "everything-you-can-do-I-can-do" syndrome, and that simply isn't true. I acknowledge intellectual equality while emphasizing dif-

ferences between male and female, and declare they are all for a blessing — to be preserved and protected with equal concern!

The pressures of society have reshaped family roles. Today most women expect, and many prefer, to have a career outside the home. The dilemma of adapting tradition to this fact challenges our best Judaic minds. In the process of enhancing the female role in our religion, we must be careful not to diminish that of the male.

If Jewish women are given the right to do everything that Jewish men are entitled to do, in addition to the natural role of motherhood, it seems to me that Jewish men will eventually be aware of a sense of loss. In our anxiety to correct past wrongs, we are in danger of creating new ones.

The decision to ordain women as rabbis has not been a balance of inequities so much as a bow to pressure, an expedient to the demands of society. And I submit that society has not always acted in its own best interests. Our ability to think and reason often steers us on a tangent, away from the path of nature's laws.

Dr. Gordis states, "Above all, the ordination of women in Conservative Judaism will testify to the determination to press forward toward the fulfillment of the great command in our Torah, 'You shall do what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord.'" I react to that statement with sadness, because my deepest instincts tell me the ordination of women is a step away from, not toward, that fulfillment.

West Palm Beach, Fla. HOPE P. CRAMER

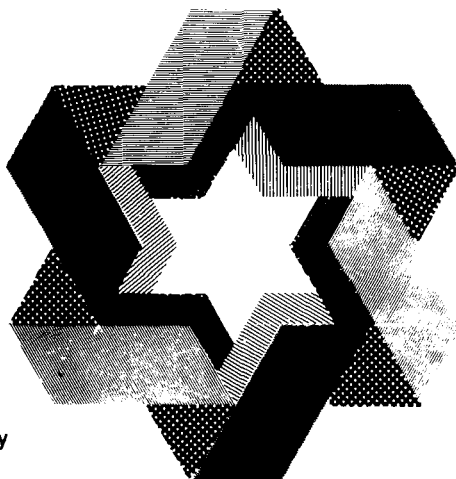
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